

STAR WARS GALAXY

MAGAZINE

SUMMER
1995

\$3.95 US/\$5.50 CAN



Campbell '95
Garner
Ternande

THE ORIGINAL ONE LAST TIME

STAR WARS

TRILOGY
ON VIDEO

AUGUST 29TH

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ON THE COVER

Original art by J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner, with Ben Fernandez (colors)

Rebel Report

Editor's note: "Happy 15th"

Communiqués

Empire letters and e-mail

Around the Galaxy

Cameras roll... all-STAR WARS store... fans convene Down Under... plus Galaxy Giveaways

KENNER FIGURES RIGHT

The toy maker was absolutely correct when it decided that STAR WARS fans were ready for a new line of action figures and vehicles

ARTISTS' PROFILE & PORTFOLIO: CAMPBELL/GARNER

Their common bonds of drawing, comics and Empire led us to this issue's cover artists

"SWASHBUCKLER IN DISGUISE": BILLY DEE WILLIAMS

He played the role of daredevil mercenary Lando Calrissian, but now he's more down to Earth

FROM THE NPR DRAMATIZATION: EMPIRE RADIO PLAY

Scenes from the pivotal duel between Luke and Darth



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HOTH POSTER

An 8-page foldout all about creating the frozen planet

ComicScan

STAR WARS comics illustrators talk about Empire's influence

DARK HORSE MINI COMIC:**"TALES OF MOS EISLEY"**

The third of three outrageous visits to the cantina. Story by Bruce Jones, art by Bret Blevins

Game Room

Video & computer adaptations of Empire let players star in the movie's greatest scenes

Star FX

Richard Edlund, the FX wizard behind Empire, recalls the challenges he and his crew met

The Galactic Bazaar

Collectors are beginning to clamor for Empire-related figures, vehicles and playsets

Cyber Notes

On-line fans have a Fett-ish for chatting about Empire scene-stealer Boba the bounty hunter

Use the Force

How does an all-Empire trivia contest strike you?

► Few anniversary celebrations could be as fun to stage as the one we're throwing inside this issue for *The Empire Strikes Back*. From J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner's whimsical cover homage to the trivia quiz on the last page, we had a blast giving 15-year-old *Empire* its much-deserved due.

Recalling the actual making of the movie, as Billy Dee Williams and Richard Edlund do, is a great way to revisit Hoth, Dagobah and Cloud City and to get reacquainted with Lando, Yoda and other remarkable characters introduced in the landmark follow-up to *STAR WARS*. Looking back at the comics, toys, games and the radio play spawned by *Empire* is an equally nostalgic journey back in space and time.

Personally, however, reading through the hundreds of letters and e-mail from readers remembering their first *Empire* experiences was the best part of putting this issue together. After all, those lasting impressions are why we're all still here, right? I'm only sorry we couldn't reprint all the remembrances, but please be assured that each and every one was thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated. (By the way, I was the managing editor of *Starlog* at the time, and saw *Empire* at a press screening in Manhattan. The magazine spent many months and issues dissecting the movie, so it's special to be covering the anniversary from this wonderful vantage.)

Happy 15th, Empire



Impressive were the vivid details fans conjured up. Many of you were only a few years old in May 1980, though you remembered long lines at the theater or the names of friends you went with. Those who were older came up with names of theaters, what you bought at the concession stand and conversations had on the way home.

Amazing, too, were the common things recalled, such as the Twentieth Century-Fox logo at the opening or John Williams' thrilling music during the Battle of Hoth. The effects-laden sequences on the frozen planet were almost unanimously praised as *Empire's* most dramatic—second only to the shocking revelation by Darth Vader that he was Luke's father, Anakin Skywalker.

Interesting was the taking of sides by fans in either the Rebel or Imperial camps. Many of you were devastated by the Empire's "striking back" power and were heartened only at the prospect of resolving the Alliance's plight in a third movie (even if three years seemed a lifetime to wait). Others cheered the bad guys and welcomed a less-than-happy ending. Yet both sides embraced *Empire's* most celebrated newcomer, Boba Fett, perhaps because he's such an enigma. "Cool" was the ubiquitous description of the mysterious bounty hunter whose ultimate allegiance still is unknown.

Overall, there was universal agreement that *The Empire Strikes Back* is one of the greatest movies ever, and that while the grandest of "home entertainment centers" can't equal the majesty of a 70-mm theater screen, video reruns are wildly popular. That phenomenon also assures that when *Empire's* 20th anniversary rolls around, even today's youngest kids will be able to rekindle their first memories.

See you in the next issue...

Bob Wood

Editor



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Prepress: Colorlith Corporation

Printing: Imprimerie Ronalds

LUCASFILM LTD. / LICENSING DIV.

Publishing Dir.: LUCY AUTREY WILSON

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ADVERTISING SALES

BOB ROSEN / K.Q.E.R. (212) 599-9500



STAR WARS GALAXY MAGAZINE (ISSN 1081-1342) is published quarterly by The Topps Company, Inc., One Whitehall Street, New York, New York 10004, (212) 374-0300. Arthur T. Shorin, Chairman; John J. Langdon, President. *STAR WARS* is © by Lucasfilm Ltd. Text and illustrations are © 1995 Lucasfilm Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Used Under Authorization. Application to mail at Second-Class postage is pending at New York, NY, and at additional offices. SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$3.99 per year, \$8 Canada and \$25 foreign orders—in U.S. funds only. Subscribers receive Deluxe Collectors' Edition. Write to: Subscription Department, *STAR WARS GALAXY MAGAZINE*, P.O. Box 555, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. The magazine assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts or artwork and reserves the right to accept or reject any editorial or advertising material. Contents of this magazine may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, unless expressly authorized in writing by the Publisher. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: *STAR WARS GALAXY MAGAZINE*, P.O. Box 555, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. Printed in Canada.

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EMPIRE Remembrances

Readers and STAR WARS fans from around the world recall the first time they saw *The Empire Strikes Back*

♦ I can remember the first time I saw *The Empire Strikes Back*. I was nine years old, and I was on a family trip to Florida. We passed a huge theater that proclaimed the movie title in bold letters. We pulled in... and waited a very long time in a huge line.... I remember covering my eyes at the sight of the wampa... and everyone... oohing at the sight of the asteroid slug monster. It was a terrific experience. And it was only years later when I discovered that I saw *Empire* on its premiere date.
 RYAN POMINVILLE Hudson, WI

♦ I was front row center (much to the chagrin of my mother!). The lights went down and my world changed forever. STAR WARS was

♦ (Feel free to correct my English, I mostly write in French). [Living in] a small town, we received the film weeks after everybody else. So when *Empire* came to Montreal (the big town), I took a train to get there. First the train had an accident (nothing serious), but we had to [go] to the nearest town for another train.

After a two-hour delay, [that] train finally arrived. The film was in English, but it must be one of the four greatest films I ever saw.
 JACQUES AUDIO Drummondville, Quebec, Canada

♦ When I found out Darth was Luke's father... I was infuriated. Mind you, it had nothing to do with the film. I was mad at the jerk who walked out of the early screening, saw the line for the later shows and bellowed, "Darth Vader is Luke Skywalker's father!" at the top of his lungs.
 ANDREW ALLEN Minneapolis

♦ Who could forget Lando Calrissian? His character provides a much appreciated peek into Han Solo's mysterious background and a foil for the villains as well as the heroes. The audience gets to watch him develop from a traitor into a guilt-ridden friend. Perhaps, that is the main allure of *ESB*: change. The whole movie is about the dramatic unfolding of events that shaped the series. From the blossoming romance and sparks between Han and Leia to Luke's growth as a Jedi and his first devastating confrontation with Darth Vader, intense, hard-hitting and important events take place. They not only occur on a galactic level, with the Empire's victory over the fleeing Rebels, but also involve personal character development and interaction. Basically, *ESB* has it all.
 MEI-YI CHUN chun@uhavax.hartford.edu

♦ My most intense memory was arriving at the theater only to be told that [Empire] was SOLD OUT! However, my father and I... waited the movie's entire length so we were guaranteed to see it opening day. Thanks, Dad!
 BRET PARKS Walnut Cove, NC

♦ A HOT SUMMER'S DAY IN '81, FOR BELGIAN THEATERS ARE LATE, I'M STANDING IN THE WAITING LINE, IN AN ECSTATIC STATE. AFTER THREE LONG YEARS, MY HEROES CAME BACK TO ME, *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* IS IN TOWN, ALL COME AND SEE! BAFFLED AT AT-ATs STOMPING OVER THE ICY PLAINS OF HOTH, LEARNING OF THE FORCE BY YODA IN HIS TATTERED CLOTH. ON BESPIN, LIGHTSABERS CLASH, THE CROWD GOING MAD, OH, NO! IT CAN'T BE TRUE: DARTH VADER IS LUKE'S DAD! THE THEATER'S CLOSING NOW, I WISH THAT I COULD STAY, BUT NOT TO WORRY, TOMORROW IS ANOTHER EMPIRE DAY!

HOW ABOUT THAT? MY FIRST ENGLISH POEM.
 MARK DERMUL Dennenlaan, Belgium

♦ I was 13 years old when my mother got me out of school—the old doctor's excuse—to see the first showing on May 21, 1980. I was on the edge of my seat through the whole two hours plus, from the Hoth battle to when R2-D2 got the hyperdrive working and saved everyone. But I do have a confession to make. When the movie ended, I was... so angry that the Empire had won that round. [But] as time went on and I got a little older, I realized that you have to lose a few battles to win the war. It's kind of like life.
 GLEN PATTERSON Columbus, OH

♦ MY FIRST IMPRESSION IS OF THE LINE TO GET INTO THE THEATER. THERE WERE PEOPLE DRESSED AS DARTH VADER [AND] PRINCESS LEIA, AND OTHERS COVERED IN STAR WARS PINS AND BUTTONS. I DIDN'T KNOW IT, BUT I WAS ATTENDING MY FIRST STAR WARS CONVENTION! AT THE CANDY STAND, THEY WERE SELLING COCA-COLA PROMOTIONAL POSTERS (BY BORIS VALLEJO) FOR 25c WITH EVERY POPCORN BOUGHT. THE POSTER WAS SO COOL! BUT I DIDN'T HAVE A QUARTER! I WAS TOO SHY TO ASK [MY FRIEND] PHILIP'S DAD TO BUY ME ONE, SO I SNEAKED AWAY TO TELL THE GIRL BEHIND THE COUNTER, "I DON'T HAVE A QUARTER, HOW CAN I GET ONE OF THOSE?" SHE MUST HAVE SEEN THE ANGUISH ON MY FACE AND TAKEN PITY ON ME. SHE SAID, "WELL, I COULD LET YOU HAVE THIS ONE, IT'S A LITTLE RIPPED, BUT IF YA WANT IT..." "OH, YEAH...?" I SAID. "THANK YOU SOOOO MUCH!!" ...THANK YOU TO THE ANGEL BEHIND THE COUNTER FOR TEACHING ME A LESSON OF KINDNESS I'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN. I'VE STILL GOT THAT SAME RIPPED POSTER ALL THESE YEARS LATER (AS WELL AS A COUPLE OF MINT ONES!).
 CURT VIGNERI Marriestown, MI

♦ I was finishing my last few weeks as a fifth grader. I remember talking with my best friend, Nick. He told me his father had bought tickets for his entire family and their babysitter to see *Empire* that night in downtown Washington, D.C. I was envious. When I got home I told my mom how lucky Nick was, and she promised to take me to see *Empire* as soon as she could find time. After changing, I headed to the community pool. I was playing shuffleboard... when my mom drove up, beeping the horn of our red and white VW van. "Karl!" my mom said, "Nick's babysitter got sick and he has an extra ticket!" **KARL ROHNER** Glenn Dale, MD

♦ I was three years old. I annoyed everyone [in my family by] asking when we would be going. When we finally got there, I fell asleep within the first 15 minutes. The next time we saw it, I made it to Yoda's talk with Luke about raising the ship from the swamp's clutches. Finally, the third and fourth times, I saw the whole movie and loved it. **ROBERT POERSCHKE** Centereach, NY

♦ Pertaining to that seminal moment when Darth informed Luke he was his father, I remember being somewhat shocked. Oddly enough, I have stronger memories of the gasps my friends let out when I informed them of this incredible twist in genealogy at school the following Monday. **BILL GRINDLER** Rutherford, NJ

♦ I remember the first time I saw *Empire*, which was in my home city of Canberra, Australia. It was at a newly renovated cinema's opening and ESB was their first movie to be screened. My friend and I queued for about four hours waiting for the doors to open so we could get the first two tickets sold in Canberra. Guess what? We did!!! **DAVID FISHER** Queanbeyan, Australia

♦ *Empire* is a great film, and is filled with scenes and moments that should be framed and hung in some sort of inter-planetary gallery!! **CHRIS COWDRILL** Northfield, Birmingham, England *Envelope art by Chris Cowdrill*



♦ We were on a mission. I, being the master of adult penmanship, forged two notes for early dismissal from school. My friend, the brains of the outfit, made the crucial calculations of time and escape. Our destination: the local theater and a five o'clock showtime. We were Rebels, and *Empire* was calling. We arrived around

12:30.... As the hours went by, I was taken aback at the constant flow of people arriving early to wait in line. It was amazing to me that so many people would leave work early, skip baseball practice, postpone dinner or risk the sheer torture of after-school detention as we had to be there. Once inside the theater, I marveled at the crowd's enthusiasm and my own.... I had seen *STAR WARS* many times during that summer [three] years before, but had never noticed the widespread enjoyment the *STAR WARS* galaxy produced amongst all the people of different ages and backgrounds. It is for this insight alone that I am still a fan, and this thought alone that the opening of *Empire* is memorable to me. **DAVID L. CURRY** Springfield, IL

I left the theater saddened by what had happened to our heroes, but nonetheless thrilled to see that George Lucas had done it once more. When I got home, I couldn't concentrate on my homework. My head was still in the stars. As far as I was concerned, 1983 couldn't come fast enough. **MARY JO FOX** Vienna, VA

♦ I was 11 years old at the time. As we left the cinema, we were all brainwashed, and as we followed my parents we talked about the film non-stop. It was then that we saw that we were following the wrong adults. **NICK DENTON** Dartford, Kent, England

♦ I first saw *The Empire Strikes Back* as part of a *STAR WARS* triple bill, back in 1983, having somehow missed it during its original release. I was left enthralled by the cliffhanger ending. Fortunately, within five minutes I was engrossed in *Return of the Jedi* and yet another bag of popcorn. How on earth most fans stayed sane for three years between *ESB* and *ROTJ* is a complete mystery to me, and I'm sure a few went bald pulling their hair out! **STEVEN FIELD** Brentwood, Essex, England

♦ The thing I remember most vividly from my first viewing of my favorite film of the trilogy has got to be Princess Leia's lips. Yes, the first appearance of Leia, looking all cool and icy (and beautiful) in the Echo Base command center... still gives me chills to this day. There was a chorus of oohs from the young boys in the audience... and I was oohing right along with them. **TODD KILLINGER** New York

♦ When *Empire* opened, I was living in North Dakota. I was eight years old, and my father was stationed at Grand Forks Air Force Base.... What I remember most of all, is the fact that I went each of the first five nights. That is not in itself spectacular, except that a freak May blizzard hit and I stood in line in the snow each night freezing in an attempt to see it just one more time. **JEFF WEDDING** boneman@pioneer.nevada.edu

♦ My memories of seeing *Empire* for the first time are special ones. First off, my mom let me stay out of school that day to be one of the first people in town to see the movie! At eight years old, that [was] cool! Then I was interviewed at the theater... and had my name in the newspaper. That was even cooler! Then there was the film itself. It's hard to put into words everything you feel when something you've waited on for so long finally arrives. It was something I'll never forget. That's the best way to put it. **LEE KARR Savannah, GA**

♦ I finally convinced by grandmother to take my little sister and myself. The theater was packed, and my sister and I had to sit in different areas of the theater while Grandma watched over us. Now as I look back, *Empire* wasn't only about the fight of good versus evil, but about recognizing the family you have, whether one is the dark champion of an oppressive Empire or the tender, giving grandmother who gave up her quiet afternoon to stand near you in a crowded theater. **Russ Krook III Bemidji, MN**

♦ Being about eight years old, I bugged my mother... so much that she agreed to take me to see [Empire on] opening night!!! We got to the theater and there were large crowds. We waited patiently as the line got smaller and smaller.... To make a long story short, we got to the ticket window just as the employee was placing a "Sold Out" sign up. Denied, despondent, depressed, I walked back to the car and felt I would never be happy again, that is until my mother told me we would see it the next day, which we did!!! **DENNIS F. TUCKER East Longmeadow, Mass. dtucker@wnec.edu**

♦ One thing that stands out in my mind from *Empire*... has to be the bounty hunters—especially Boba Fett. Although they didn't get a lot of screen time, it was the mystery about them that caught my eye and kept me hoping for more. It is because of them that I devote my own folder on AOL for Boba Fett fans. **Derek Fridolfs FSUDog@aol.com**

♦ I was 12 years old.... The opening script had announced that it was "a dark time for the Rebellion." As I watched, and especially as the movie ended on such a defeated note, I understood just how dark it truly was. So, in short, a fairy tale showed its teeth. All was not sweetness and light, and it was going to take hard work and sacrifice to overcome injustice and tyranny. **MATTHEW BRACHER Kent, WA**

♦ THE ONLY THING THAT BOTHERED ME [WAS] THAT CHEWIE STILL DID NOT GET A MEDAL IN THIS ONE. **CLIFF FARRELL NEW SMYRNA BEACH, FL**

♦ ...My dad took me to see *Empire*. I was only five and a half. I began to fall asleep near the end. I woke up to see Vader cut off Luke's hand. Then I realized I could not feel my legs. Had Vader somehow cut them off?, I began to think. No, I had fallen asleep with my legs curled underneath me. It had cut off my circulation. And that's how I remember *Empire*. **Jason Darnell Elkin, NC**

♦ I'M OF GEORGE LUCAS' GENERATION, THE ONE THAT GREW UP WITH THE BEGINNING OF TV BY WHICH OUR IMAGINATIONS SOARED AS WE WATCHED *CAPTAIN VIDEO*, *TOM CORBETT SPACE CADET*, *SPACE PATROL*... AND MOVIES LIKE *WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE*, *WAR OF THE WORLDS* AND *FORBIDDEN PLANET*.... WHEN *EMPIRE* APPEARED, I WAS REALLY READY TO HAVE ANOTHER LOOK AT MY SCI-FI PAST, THIS TIME WITH MY TWO SMALL CHILDREN. I HAD STUDIED THE SAME MATERIALS IN MYTHOLOGY AS LUCAS HAD, SO I RELATED TO THE THEMES OF [HIS] TWO [STAR WARS] MOVIES. THE SCENE FROM *ESB* THAT STANDS OUT STRONGEST IN MY MEMORY IS WHERE LUKE... CONFRONTS THE APPARITION OF DARTH VADER AND LIGHTSABERS HIS HEAD OFF. AS THE MASK SUBLIMATES INTO SMOKE, LUKE'S FACE APPEARS INSIDE THE HELMET. TURNING TO MY WIFE, I WHISPERED, "DARTH IS LUKE'S FATHER." I RECOGNIZED THE MYTHIC IMAGERY. PORTRAYED WAS NOT SO MUCH THE CHOICE TO BE MADE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL, BUT THE CONFLICT INVOLVED IN DISENTANGLING ONE'S IDENTITY FROM THAT OF ONE'S FATHER AND/OR MOTHER. LUKE WOULD REALIZE THAT CONFLICT WHEN DARTH VADER REVEALS HIS PARENTAL RELATIONSHIP. **REINHOLD HOHNSEIN Olds, Alberta, Canada**



♦ ENVELOPE ART BY ANNE MEYER, MODESTO, CA.

♦ The first time I saw *ESB*, I was between my junior and senior years in high school. My best friend, Eve Levine, and I would sit through other movies twice just to see the trailers for *ESB*. It looked exciting and more "adult" than *ANH*, what with the Han and Leia kiss... [We] went to one of the first showings. *Empire* is no doubt the best movie of the trilogy, but when we left the theater, all I could think about was how depressed I felt. Rather than the euphoria I felt after seeing *Star Wars*, I was left with the awful knowledge that it would be another THREE years before I could find out what happened to Han! **SUZANNE HANNERS Ghislaine@aol**

♦ When I got home I filled up an ice cube tray, put my Han Solo figure in it and froze him until 1983. Crazy kid! **COLIN SHERIDAN New Hyde Park, NY**

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♦ *It was a week before Empire opened in theaters. I was a young attorney, living in Washington, D.C., who had just decided to accept a job with a young company named Lucasfilm, with headquarters in Los Angeles. And since I was still living in Washington, I was invited to attend the gala premiere of Empire, which also happened to be a benefit for the Special Olympics. It is a day I will long remember.*

The festivities before the screening were a blast. Almost all eyes were on Mark Hamill. As Luke Skywalker, he unquestionably was the star. I was amazed at how down to earth he seemed. Attracting far less attention in a remote corner was Harrison Ford. He told me he was about to go off to the desert to begin shooting a movie for George called Raiders of the Lost Ark. "What's that about?" I asked. "Beats me," Harrison replied in his usual deadpan. Finally, we all filed into the theater to see The Empire Strikes Back. It was an audience of the rich and famous, the not-so-famous and a couple hundred children who may not have understood all the nuances of STAR WARS, but who appreciated a thrill and

♦ *I was seven years old when Empire was released. I loved [it then] and will always as an adult. Empire, like the other two [Star Wars] films, brought entertainment as well as morals to my life. A favorite line from Empire that I shall never forget and [will] pass on to my children is Yoda's: "Do or do not. There is no try." Advice to live by from a long, long time ago, until many moons from now.*
MICHAEL VALENTINE Hamburg, NY

♦ *I was eight years old. For one thing, I remember how much Yoda sounded an awful lot like Grover from Sesame Street.* JEFF THRASHER [address not known]

♦ *Empire's video release came a little before my eighth birthday. By then, I had become the Star Wars-hungry animal I still am today. Invitations were sent out for my birthday extravaganza. All my second-grade friends were invited.... Needless to say, that party was a success. We laughed, we cried, it was the feel-good moment of the year.* BRIAN HOLST LeClaire, IA

♦ *[I SAW] EMPIRE IN THE THEATER AT THE AGE OF 4.... I SAW ALL THE TOYS THAT I HAD PLAYED WITH OVER THE PAST YEAR, LIVE-IN MOTION, TALKING, FIGHTING, EXPLODING—ON THE SCREEN IN FRONT OF ME. THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE WAS TRULY BREATHTAKING.* BRAD D. KNOWLTON Jackson, MS



♦ *What stands out most in my mind about Empire was the ending. It virtually guaranteed that there would be another movie. Now that I'm 27, I'm just as excited about the next series of [STAR WARS] movies. I can't wait!*
KELLY R. BARGER Kinston, NC

expressed it louder than any audience before or since. What an experience it was—the screams and cheers as Rebel snowspeeders zoomed past towering walkers, the amazement and wonder as we collectively caught a first glimpse of the sage Yoda, the cries and stomping as Luke battled Vader, and the utter shock and disbelief as Vader first spoke the unthinkable words, "No, Luke. I am your father!" As thunderous applause greeted every one of the film's end credits, I sat tingling with the realization not only that I had seen an astounding film but also that I had made a great decision in taking the job with Lucasfilm. Perhaps more than any of the millions of people who flocked to see Empire, my life has not been the same since. HOWARD ROFFMAN Vice President, Lucasfilm Licensing

♦ *When my father and I left [Empire], we talked all the way home about [it]. To me the best thing about all the STAR WARS movies was the fact that my father enjoyed the movies as much as I did, and we had a common interest that still exists.*
SCOTT CARTER San Rafael, CA

♦ *The most profound impact [Empire] has had on me... is its musical score. I knew when I heard the soundtrack that I was listening to John Williams' masterpiece. Because of his wonderful music, I decided to be a musician and am graduating this year from college with a bachelor's degree in music education. Thank the Force!!!* ROBERT MAGEE San Angelo, TX

♦ *To this day, 15 years after the movie came out, I get goose bumps when I hear John Williams' Han Solo and Princess Leia theme.* JARED GREGG KypDurren@aol

♦ **ENVELOPE ART**
BY MARK KELLY,
PONTEFRAC, WEST
YORKSHIRE, UK
♦ **I WAS WAITING**
ON PINS AND NEEDLES FOR BOBA FETT TO MAKE HIS GRAND ENTRANCE. I SO WANTED TO SEE IF HE WOULD LIVE UP TO THE HYPE FROM KENNER; AND DID HE EVER. WITH JUST A FEW SHORT LINES AND VERY LITTLE SCREEN TIME, HE BECAME MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE VILLAIN. MATT BATTLE FettSaliva@aol

My memory is from just before the film came out. The trailer had shown a scene of Luke and Leia hesitantly moving in for a kiss (cut from the film, but preserved by Marvel comics), and I was ready for Luke to get the girl. I spotted the Marvel adaptation, and darned if I couldn't resist a peek. I opened right to the scene with HAN kissing Leia ("Just remember that, Leia, 'cause I'll be back".) Good Grief! Poor Luke! (Yeah,

I can still remember the mile-long line to the ticket counter. I also remember the guy the theater had dressed up as Darth Vader. He had on a black T-shirt that had a big hole in the front, and [he had] a big old beer belly. This must have been Vader's hillbilly cousin Bubba Vader. PHILIP BLACKBURN Huddy, KY

I'm only six years old, and my dad is helping me write this letter to you. I have seen Empire on video but never in the theater. What I remember the best is bounty hunters and Han getting frozen in carbonite. DAVID HARDY Chattanooga, TN

It was the opening weekend. When we asked our mom to take us, she replied, "Sorry... we've got to get you guys some new clothes." My parents, brother and I piled into the station wagon for the dreaded trip. We got to the mall. To my horror, there was a theater complex... with a huge The Empire Strikes Back sign outside. People were everywhere. Other kids were standing in line. Oh, the torture! The irony! So close, yet so far.... "Mom, Dad can we please, please, please see Empire?" "No, son. We've got more important things to do," replied my father. My brother and I sulked. As we got out of the car, my dad hurried us. "C'mon. We'd better hurry. We've got to get in line if we're going to make it," he said. "Aren't we going... shopping, Dad?" I asked. "What, are you kidding? How can we, with The Empire Strikes Back playing right here?" Pure joy filled the souls of my brother and me.

Yoda was my favorite character in [Empire]. He is sort of like Mr. Miyagi in The Karate Kid, except Yoda doesn't make Luke paint his hut or wax his car. TODD BROWN Claremont, CA

yeah, she was his sister, I know, but they didn't make it up to him until this year, with Callista.) BRENDON WAHL-BERG Pittsburgh bjwahl15+@pan.edu

...I was seven. It was Halloween and raining. I was so bummed because I would not get to go trick or treating, the highlight of the year. My parents rented [Empire]. After watching for just a couple of minutes, I totally forgot about not being able to get tons of free candy. That was the best Halloween I have ever had, and I still watch [Empire every] Halloween. CORDELL GATHERUM Corvallis, OR

Of course, it was one of the greatest days of my life. SCOTT CLARK SClark R1SD@aol

Growing up, I was very sick and spent most of my young life in hospitals... so when STAR WARS came out I made it my place to run to when I felt bad. When Empire came out I was thrilled my place to hide... got much bigger. TIMOTHY SPANGLER DOTY Indianapolis

STAR WARS

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Micro Machines

SPACE

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What stands out most are the events that tied my stomach in knots: Luke's encounter with Vader [on Dagobah]; the back of Vader's head; the hopelessness of Han and Leia on Bespin when Vader has them over for lunch; Vader's claim to be Luke's father. Vader. Vader. Vader. I think the Empire was pretty [ticked] off over losing their Death Star. CHRIS BONHAM Santa Clara, CA

I'M NOW A 30-YEAR-OLD MAN. AS A U.S. MARINE, I SERVED IN TWO CONFLICTS (PANAMA AND KUWAIT) AND THE L.A. RIOTS. I GOT MARRIED. I'VE SEEN A LOT OF THE WORLD, GOOD AND BAD. AND YET, FOR SHEER EXCITEMENT AND WONDER, I DON'T THINK ANYTHING I'VE EXPERIENCED CAN COMPARE WITH THAT GLORIOUS DAY 15 YEARS AGO. NICK JOHNSON Los Angeles

WE INVITE your comments, criticisms, questions and suggestions. Send us envelope art or photos of your Star Wars collections. But, please, do not send unsolicited ideas, articles or art for Lucasfilm. Sorry, but we cannot read or pass them on to Lucasfilm. Mail letters to: STAR WARS GALAXY MAGAZINE, Communiqués, One Whitehall St., New York, NY 10004. Or e-mail us at SWGMTOPPS@aol.com. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity.

AROUND THE GALAXY

Have you heard? The next *Star Wars* adventure is in the can. But wait... we're not talking about a movie. The newest big *STAR WARS* production will be *Rebel Assault II*, an interactive action game from LucasArts Entertainment Co. that will debut this fall.

One of the most exciting aspects of the new game—a sequel of sorts to the already-popular *Rebel Assault*, a *STAR WARS*-flavored action



CAMERAS ROLL ON NEW *STAR WARS* PRODUCTION

arcade game—is that it will feature extensive live action, not just computer-generated scenes. In fact, *Rebel II* represents the first time George Lucas has allowed anyone other than himself to film a live-action *STAR WARS* fantasy.

In the game, some characters are depicted by videotaped actors whose scenes were shot on blue screen and then composited onto 3-D backgrounds. *SWGM* reporter Sue Berkey was invited to spend some time on the set. She reports that perhaps the most impressive among the cast was none other than Darth Vader. Although he was his usual ominous self, towering over the crew in his impressive black cape and gleaming helmet, the Dark Lord of the Sith demonstrated uncharacteristic patience as his scenes in *Rebel Assault II* required take after take.

Also on the set were the game's two leading characters: the player's alter ego, Rookie One, portrayed by actor Jamison Jones; and Rookie's mentor and fellow Rebel pilot, Ru Murleen, played by actress Julie Eccles. Other familiar "stars" on hand for the shoot were the many authentic *Star Wars* costumes and props that were dusted off after so many years for this latest intergalactic adventure.

In the next issue, reporter Berkey will have an exclusive story on the making of *Rebel Assault II*. Don't miss it!

HAL BARWOOD (LEFT) DIRECTING THE LIVE ACTION FOR *REBEL ASSAULT II*, WITH STARS JULIE ECCLES AND JAMISON JONES.



CONSTRUCTING STEEL-TEC'S X-WING WILL TEST A MODELER'S METTLE.

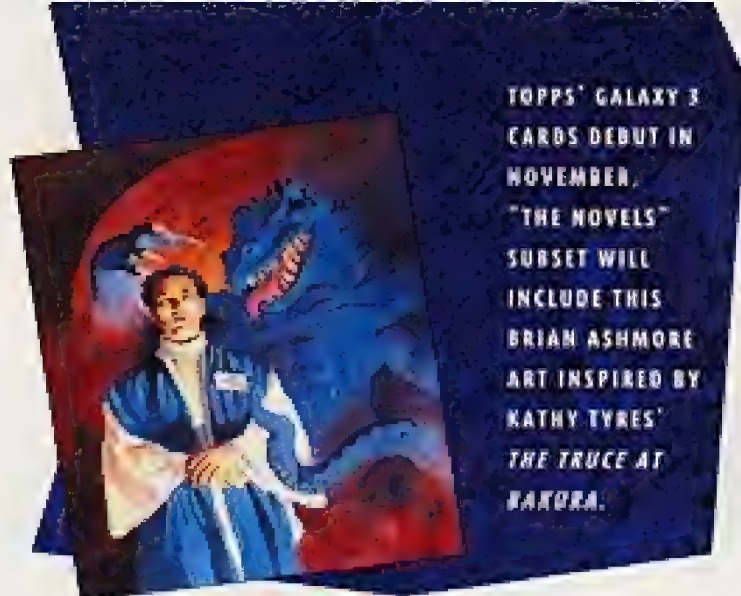
NEW PRODUCT ROUNDUP

Here's what to look for from *STAR WARS* licensees in the coming months: **A. H. Prismatic** will introduce 3-D embossed stickers... **Advanced Graphics** will add an Ewok, Imperial guard and Admiral Ackbar to its standees line... **Applause** will launch its line of collectible figurines, Ralph McQuarrie lithographs and other gift items... Newcomer **Changes** will introduce a line of T-shirts featuring stipple art by Bill Harrison... **CUI** will offer covers from *Dark Empire* comics in a tin collector's box... **Hallmark** will publish a 1996 *STAR WARS* calendar... **Hamilton Collection's** latest plates feature a snowspeeder and a Star Destroyer... Collections of **Lewis Galoob's** *STAR WARS* Micro Machines figures will be offered... **Micro Games America** is set to introduce a Darth Vader Power Talker walkie-talkie set... A 3-D *Millennium Falcon* puzzle is coming from **Milton Bradley**... **Moustrak** adds three new mousepads showcasing Dark Horse art... **Party Professionals** will release Don Post-designed Boba Fett and Vader vinyl mask/helmets... **Remco** will launch its Steel-Tec X-wing fighter model kit... **Screamin' Products** will include Luke Skywalker in its model line... **Thinkway Toys** will feature R2-D2 and C-3PO together on a coin bank...

MASTERVISIONS GIVEAWAY!!

To thank readers for their input on the jambo MasterVisions cards, coming in October, Topps is giving away a dozen 36-card sets.

To enter the random drawing, send your name, age and address in a letter or on a postcard to MasterVisions Giveaway, *Star Wars Galaxy Magazine*, One Whitehall St., New York, NY 10004. Entries must be received by Oct. 31, 1995.



TOPPS' GALAXY 3 CARDS DEBUT IN NOVEMBER. "THE NOVELS" SUBSET WILL INCLUDE THIS BRIAM ASHMORE ART INSPIRED BY KATHY TYRES' *THE TRUCE AT BAKURA*.

What's UP DOWN UNDER



AUSSIE FANS COMPETED FOR PRIZES IN A COSTUME CONTEST AT THE FIRST ALL-STAR WARS CONVENTION STAGED BY AUSTRALIA'S STAR WALKING INC. LAST SPRING.

Star Wars fans from Australia and as far away as Singapore converged on the Town House Hotel in Melbourne last spring for a three-day *Star Wars* convention staged by Star Walking Inc., the fan-run, non-profit *Star Wars* Appreciation Society of Australia.

The cover of the convention's program featured a wrap-around painting of Luke on Tatooine by Australian artist Hugh Fleming, a noted Dark Horse Comics cover artist on *Star Wars* and Indiana Jones projects. Hugh was a guest speaker at the con, along with ILM effects artist Jon Berg, present and former Lucasfilm archivists Nelson Hall and Don Bies, and *Star Wars* author and collector Steve Sansweet. The speakers led discussions of everything from behind-the-scenes looks at how the first films were made to fan speculation about story lines for the next trilogy.

Films and TV programs relating to the trilogy were screened all three days. The first night of the con featured a sit-down dinner at the cantina; the second night, fans in costumes vied for prizes (one winner claimed to be "Daryl, Mr. Vader's valet"). An art show and an auction of *Star Wars* merchandise also proved to be popular. Shane Morrissey, head of Star Walking, says the group is already talking about another convention in 1997.

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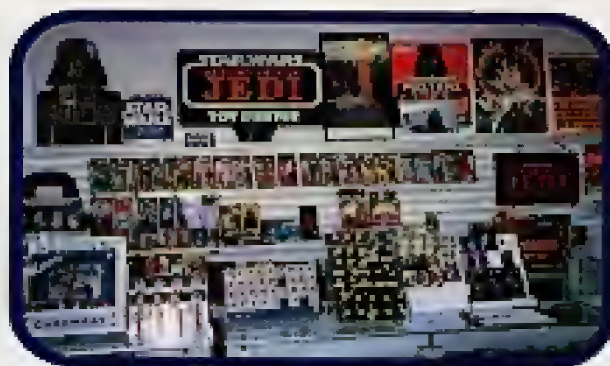
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Worth-y Endeavor

Since Lance Worth saw *STAR WARS* in 1977, his life has never been the same. "I went haywire," the 29 year old admits, "buying everything." Millions of fans could testify likewise, but how many of them are today running what is perhaps the only all-*STAR WARS* retail store in the galaxy?

After spending five years as a dealer, working



conventions, buying collections and running a mail-order business in San Diego, Worth is fulfilling an 18-year dream. "I always wanted to open a chain of stores where fans could buy new *STAR WARS* stuff and trade with one another," he says.

He didn't open a chain, but at Star

Force Collectibles, his 1,000+-sq.-ft. store in El Cajon, that's just what Worth is doing. He has items dating back to '77 (posters, books, greeting cards) and will buy old collections, but the emphasis is on what's new, and only from licensees.

"Half of what we have sells for less than \$5," says Worth. His priciest item is a \$500 *STAR WARS* swing set.

Looking for a hard-to-find *STAR WARS* item? Contact Worth at Star Force Collectibles, 367 N. Magnolia, El Cajon, CA 92020; (619)588-7697.

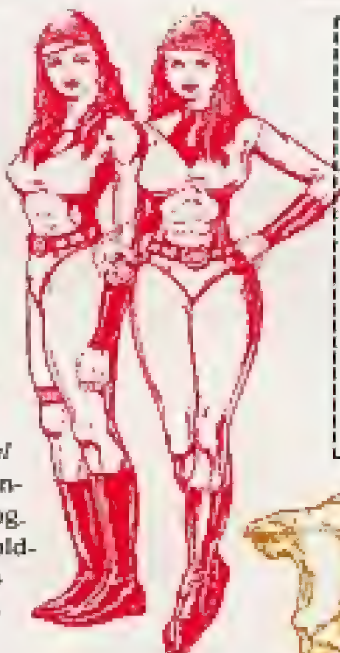
STAR WORDS

Del Rey Books, an official *STAR WARS* publisher, has a few upcoming titles that you'll want to put at the top of your reading list. The page-turning begins in September with a special trio of hardcover editions of *A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. Publication will coincide with the rerelease of the movie trilogy by Fox Video; the books' covers feature the same art that appears on the video packaging. This marks the first time the *Empire* and *Jedi* novels have been offered in hardcover. The suggested retail price is \$16 for each book.

In October, Del Rey will release *The STAR WARS Technical Journal*, a 144-page, \$35 hardcover written by Shane Johnson, previously published in a three-issue format by Starlog. Loaded with photos, production art and six eight-page fold-out blueprints (rendered by Johnson), the book goes into great detail on spacecraft, planets, Mos Eisley, Darth Vader's life-support mask, lightsabers and other topics.

Details about the trilogy's many marvelous characters could fill a whole book—and that's just what Del Rey and *STAR WARS* aficionado Andy Mangels have produced with *The Essential Guide to Characters*, set for a November pub date at \$18. This volume provides the most comprehensive descriptions and profiles of every important player, not only from the movies but also from the novels, comics, TV specials and games. The 224-page trade paperback includes photos and original line drawings, so you can also see what each character looks like.

COMING IN MARCH: *The Essential Guide to Planets and Vessels*, a fully illustrated primer to the 100 most important craft in the *STAR WARS* universe, written by Bill Smith, an editor at West End Games, and illustrated by Troy Vigil and Doug Chiang.

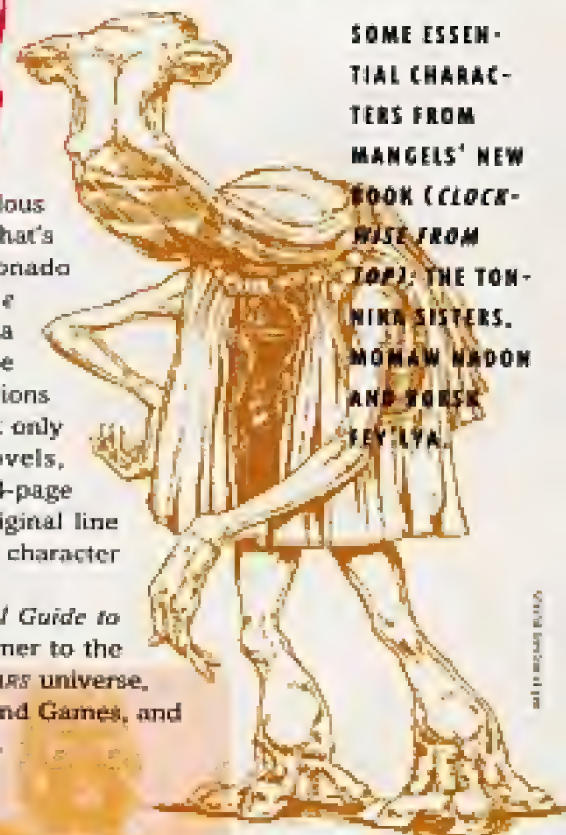
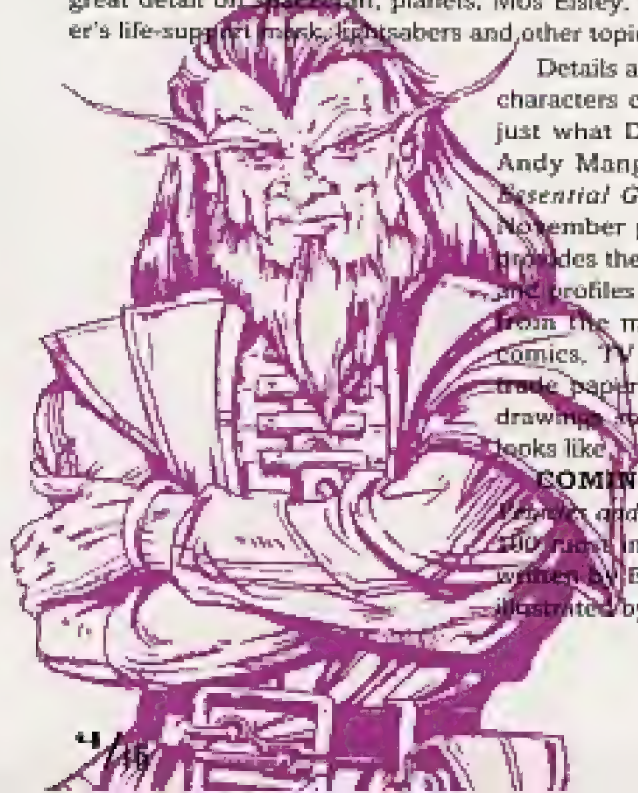


GALAXY GIVEAWAY

Del Rey Books is giving away 12 copies of its recently published *The National Public Radio Dramatization of The Empire Strikes Back*, autographed by the scriptwriter, Brian Daley.

To enter the random drawing, send your name, age and address in a letter or on a postcard to Book Giveaway, *Star Wars Galaxy Magazine*, One Whitehall St., New York, NY 10004. Entries must be received by Oct. 31, 1995. Winners will be notified by mail.

SOME ESSENTIAL CHARACTERS FROM MANGELS' NEW BOOK (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP): THE TONNIX SISTERS, MOMAW NODON AND YODA.



MR. SMITH GOES TO THE MALL

He's a major comic book fan and a longtime *STAR WARS* fiend, and lately he's been hanging out at a mall with Shannen Doherty. Meet Kevin Smith, 24, the highly regarded director-writer behind last year's hip comedy *Clerks* and the upcoming *Mallrats*.

In an interview with *SWGM*'s Kevin Fitzpatrick, Smith says the *STAR WARS* trilogy and a steady diet of comics are what propelled him into filmmaking. He made *Clerks* for \$27,000 in 21 days in his native New Jersey (he hocked his comics collection and sold his car to fund it). It went on to take in \$3.1 million at the box office, and was the darling at film festivals. The so-called "*STAR WARS* Scene" is a highlight of the black-and-white comedy, as two clerks debate the merits of the destruction of the second Death Star.

For *Mallrats*, coming in August, he had a bigger budget (\$6 million) as well as a bigger *STAR WARS* homage, this one involving the returning character Silent Bob, portrayed by Smith. Bob's mission: the Jedi Mind Trick. It's actually one of several *STAR WARS* references in the new movie, which stars Doherty, Jeremy London, Jason Lee and Michael Rooker—plus surprise guest Stan Lee.



Naturally, Smith had plenty to say about this issue's special *Empire* theme. Here's a sample:

SWGM: So you're a major *Empire* fan.

Smith: *Empire* is hands down one of the finest films ever made. Almost flawless. You have to appreciate a movie that doesn't go all nice and shiny at the end. There are questions; it's not all tied up and pat. When they take off with Han, you don't know what is going to happen.

SWGM: In *Clerks*, when Dante Hicks is talking about *Empire* being the best movie, that's you?

Smith: Oh yeah, all that was me talking.

SWGM: What was the highlight of *Empire*?

Smith: Boba Fett! I love the look of Boba. As a character, he doesn't say much; you find out more about him in the old Marvel comics.

SWGM: Was Fett your favorite character?

Smith: He truly can't be a favorite because you really don't know what's going on. Han Solo probably would be my favorite. He's a rogue, and a great one.

DECIPHER'S GAME PLAN

Coming from Decipher Inc., this fall is the long-awaited *STAR WARS Customizable Card Game*. Players represent the light and dark sides of the Force, battling to decide the fate of the galaxy. The initial card set will be based on *A New Hope*, but Decipher will cover the entire trilogy. A spokesman for the Norfolk, Va.-based company tells *SWGM* that they will release five expansions before the end of next year.

The *STAR WARS* game will contain many photos from all three films, as well as all-new digitally created images. Assisting Decipher are the keepers of the Jedi Holocron themselves, the folks at West End Games, whose roleplaying game publications are well known to fans. Look for an expanded report on the Decipher game in Issue #5. — MICHAEL MIKAELIAN

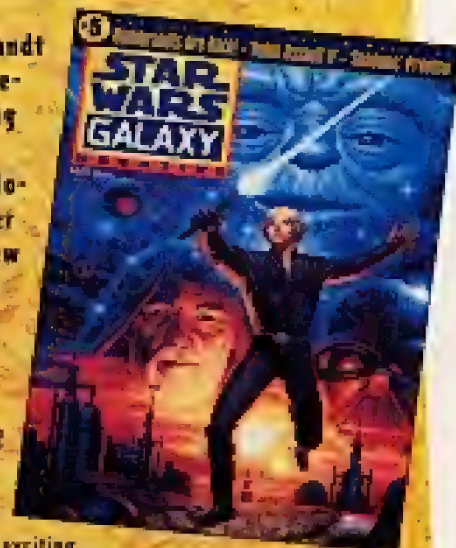


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TEAM REVIEW
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COMING IN OCTOBER The HILDEBRANDTS Are Back!

Twin brothers Greg and Tim Hildebrandt helped launch the *Star Wars* phenomenon in 1977 with their heroic painting featured as a movie poster. Now they're finally reunited with the trilogy and have illustrated an epic cover for Issue #5. In an exclusive interview and portfolio, they'll show and tell us what they've been up to over the past 18 years. And there's more to look forward to in the next issue:

- * "Teaser" news about the upcoming *Shadows of the Empire*
- * An interview with Ralph McQuarrie and a preview of his Bantam book including exciting new art... plus an 8-page McQuarrie poster
- * The behind-the-scenes story on the rerelease of the movie trilogy from Fox Video
- * Cyber Notes from a live, on-line chat scheduled with a Lucasfilm spokesperson who will answer questions and debunk rumors
- * A one-on-one talk with Industrial Light & Magic FX genius Dennis Muren
- * An interview with Dark Horse Comics' publisher, Mike Richardson... and a brand-new 8-page adventure
- * PLUS... Roleplaying game fiction... new products... contests & giveaways... and more!





KENNER FIGURES RIGHT

The toy maker was absolutely correct in deciding that *STAR WARS* fans are ready for a new line of action figures and vehicles **BY BOB WOODS**



f the hundreds of *STAR WARS* products produced over the past 18 years, arguably the most enduring are the myriad action figures, vehicles and playsets from Kenner Products. It was a fluke of sorts that brought the license to Kenner (now part of the Hasbro Toy Group) in the first place—Mattel passed it up in favor of the rights to *Battlestar Galactica*—and *STAR WARS* has been a hallmark of the Cincinnati-based toy maker ever since.

Perhaps the greatest testament to Kenner's place in *STAR WARS* merchandising history are the legions of adults who, having bought the toys as kids when the movies were originally released, still cling to childhood memories of fitting Luke inside his landspeeder and zooming around the house, or other playtime recollections. While the ever-rising monetary value of a mint in mint card Han Solo can send collector/investors atwitter, such simple pleasures of the past are incalculable.

Just ask 29-year-old Tim Hall. He remembers all too well, one day a long time ago, trying to apply a decorative sticker to the solar panel of his TIE fighter, and messing it up. "The whole sticker was slightly askew for the life of the toy," laments Hall, who to these years later has a very powerful personal interest in *STAR WARS* toys. He's the Team Leader of Kenner's *STAR WARS* design, engineering and marketing efforts. He's also "the source" for inside information on the company's greatly anticipated new line of *STAR WARS* figures and vehicles, which begins shipping this summer

KENNER'S LINE OF NINE NEW AND IMPROVED STAR WARS ACTION FIGURES. FROM LEFT, A STORMTROOPER, DARTH VADER, HAN SOLO, LUKE SKYWALKER, CHEWBACCA, R2-D2, OBI-WAN KENOBI AND C-3PO. PRINCESS LEIA IS SHOWN ON PAGE 21.

and will be available at retailers nationwide by late August.

In a move rare for close-to-the-vest Kenner, Hall granted *STAR WARS GALAXY MAGAZINE* an exclusive interview, during which he provided juicy details about the toys: nine characters (Luke, Han Solo, Princess Leia, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Chewbacca, C-3PO, R2-D2, Darth Vader and a stormtrooper) and four vehicles (Luke's X-wing, a landspeeder, a TIE fighter and the *Millennium Falcon*).

About a year and a half ago, Kenner had considered simply rereleasing some of the original toys, but then figured (correctly) that fans wouldn't be too excited with reruns. Then there was talk about making the figures in a size larger than the standard four inches, but that idea was nixed because they wouldn't fit inside the vehicles.

"We considered a lot of different of options," says Hall,



LEFT: THE HAN SOLO FIGURE IS HAND-SCULPTED IN WAX.

BELOW, FROM LEFT: HAN IN WAX; UN-PAINTED FROM THE NEW MOLD; HAND-PAINTED SAMPLE FOR APPROVAL.



process, and the other designers remembered how they played with the toy."

Before delving into design and manufacturing specifics, the team had to determine just how many toys to include in the new line. Four vehicles sounded right, but how many action figures? "We worked closely with Lucasfilm to identify the right characters," says Hall. "We based the number on which were the ones collectors really had to have. A typical action figure line might launch with four or five figures, and we're going out with nine, so we feel pretty good about that."

Then the designers got to work. Although Hall wouldn't discuss Kenner's proprietary design secrets, it's obvious that current technologies—especially the use of computers—are vastly supe-

who's been with Kenner for three years and was recently promoted to his plumb position after serving as product manager on the line. "Working closely with Lucasfilm, we felt we could give the line a whole new feel, staying close to the movies but bringing it to life for the nineties.

"The biggest discussion we had was about the importance of balancing the needs of collectors with those of kids," adds Hall, citing market research that ensured *STAR WARS* remains popular among those two distinct groups of consumers. "We set about to find a strategy to please both, basically by having all the authenticity and realism that collectors demand, plus the heroism and excitement that kids want in toys today."

With that dual strategy in place, Hall's team went to work in the spring of 1994. The group comprised about a dozen designers and engineers and two marketing people. Among the key contributors were Jim Black, Kenner's Vice President of Licensing and, neatly enough, the product manager on the very first *STAR WARS* line, and Mark Boudreaux, Director of Product Concepts and Design, who joined the company right out of college and designed the original *Falcon*.

"Another interesting thing about the core group," says Hall, "is that along with the people with the history, we had a number of young designers who [like Hall] played with the original toys." Both generations brought something to the table. "For example, we were talking about the *Millennium Falcon* toy," Hall reports, how the ramp moved up and down. The people who had been around the first time talked about it in terms of what they remembered from the manufacturing



LEIA HAS A MOLDED PLASTIC CAPE THAT REPLACES THE FABRIC ONE IN THE ORIGINAL VERSION. THE NEW LINE ALSO FEATURES REMOVABLE WEAPONS.



rior to those available in 1977. "I can say that our technology is fairly state of the art," says Hall, clearly downplaying what must be top-of-the-line facilities at a giant like Kenner, "but things like drawing boards never go out of style."

So, with some combination of keyboards and drawing boards, the designers set about creating nine figures. For reference, they watched all three movies (for the umpteenth time?), pulled still images from

the videos and pored over a vast library of *STAR WARS* art books. "The key was to keep the figures very authentic to the movies but also make them heroic and exciting for the kids," Hall states. "The original *STAR WARS* line was considered revolutionary at the time, but the aesthetics of the figures really haven't kept up [with those of recent action figures] over time. So we felt that doing them all new was the way to go.

"The stance is very important," he continues, "the positioning of the arms and legs and the body proportions, [which on the new figures are] a little beefed up. We considered several [stances] on paper, and as we sculpted them, we had a lot of give and take. We pulled Lucasfilm in earlier than we normally do with a typical toy line, and got their input because they certainly are the experts."

After pencil sketches of the figures were approved, color renderings were produced. During that stage, costumes, hair color and other details were determined, including more authentic, removable weapons. For example, the new and improved Chewie has a bowcaster in his hand; Han's blaster is truer to the one he uses in the movies; the handle of Luke's lightsaber is like the one given to him by Obi-Wan, which belonged to Luke's father, Anakin Skywalker; and the handle on Darth Vader's lightsaber is more accurate. The most evident costume change is the switch from fabric capes on Darth, Obi-Wan and Princess Leia to fuller, molded vinyl capes.

AN ORIGINAL X-WING FIGHTER (FRONT CENTER) WAS HAND-PAINTED AND DECORATED (REAR RIGHT) FOR CONCEPT APPROVAL. NEW SAMPLES (FRONT RIGHT, REAR CENTER) WERE HAND-PAINTED (REAR LEFT). A SAMPLE FROM THE FACTORY (FRONT RIGHT) IS COLORED DIFFERENTLY.





LUKE'S OLD LANDSPEEDER WAS MODIFIED (LEFT). A NEW UNPAINTED SAMPLE (CENTER) WAS HAND-PAINTED (RIGHT) FOR FINAL APPROVALS.

Following okays of the color renderings, the designers then were ready to see the figures in three-dimensional form. "Once we all agreed on the look of a figure, we sculpted it in wax in actual size," explains Hall. "When we came to agreement on that, we did a painted sample. We agreed on the colors and where the colors go. And that's where we worked very closely with Lucasfilm on both those steps to make sure the colors were just right."

From there, the manufacturing engineers took over, making sure the new molds were just right. The final step was to go into production. Kenner's quality-control group keeps close tabs on the actual manufacturing, much of which is done overseas.

While the new molds for the action figures make them look more like the movie characters, the new vehicles did not require the same attention. "Those molds are basically the same as the original [ones]," says Hall, "because the originals are very true to the movies. We've evolved them by having [more] authentic, real-movie aesthetics applied to that top-notch tooling. We've increased the level of decoration on each vehicle and moved to what we call a more advanced level of graphics, the labels and stickers that go with each vehicle. All four vehicles are fully painted and detailed, and in some cases there are decals the consumer can apply.

"If you think back to the movies, the craft you see the Imperials in is very pristine, very clean, and the Rebels' equipment is more weathered and beaten. So we carried that through with our toys.

For instance, the Imperial TIE fighter looks very close to what you see in the movies. The color is gray-blue, not white as in the first go-round. And the solar panels have photo-etched detail in them. In the old days they had giant labels that you'd apply. Now the detail is etched into the wing itself, and it just looks beautiful."

Kenner took the same approach with the landspeeder. "It's weathered appropriately. The engine detail is exposed on one of the back engines, just like you see in the movies. It still has a hovering assembly as it did before, although the old version actually had a rubber band in the mechanism to make it hover, and [the new one] has a different assembly to make it hover. That's a change that relates to new and different technology."

A technological innovation that was not available before is the addition of computer chips loaded with sound bites taken directly from the movies. Luke's X-wing fighter, which has been updated to include its signature five red bars on the back of the tail wing and rusty weathering on the nose, is a good example, says Hall. "In the



old days, it was a mylar clicker, a mechanical sound. It's very exciting to have the real laser blast sounds and the real engine roar sounds in the new version. What's neat about the X-wing is you press R2-D2, who's sticking up in the back, and the wings open as it moves to attack mode from cruising mode, and you hear the engine roar. A separate button fires the laser sounds." (Attention shoppers: batteries are required.)

Hall is especially excited about the new and improved



AN ORIGINAL MILLENNIUM FALCON WAS REPAINTED (TOP LEFT) FOR CONCEPT APPROVAL. A NEW SAMPLE (TOP RIGHT) WITH COMPUTER-GENERATED LABELS FOR WEATHERING EFFECT. LEFT: STAR WARS TEAM MEMBERS TESTING THE FALCON'S NEW ELECTRONICS.

Millennium Falcon vehicle/playset, now equipped with four sounds—an alarm, the jump to light-speed, a fly-by and a laser cannon—each activated by separate buttons. "Obviously the electronic sounds are great, but the decoration really takes it to a new level. You can see the carbon scoring marks around the exhaust, and the deck even has laser blast holes in it."

What doesn't appear to have holes in it is Kenner's planning, design and production of the new *STAR WARS* line. At least that seemed to be the reaction among scores of buyers at last February's Toy Fair, who left the New York City trade show with their *STAR WARS* batteries recharged, which translated soon after in brisk orders. Now it's up to the marketers in Cincinnati to lead the two-pronged charge: to get kids and adult collectors excited enough to buy the toys. Expect an all-out assault, including elaborate in-store displays, particularly at giant retailers such as Toys R Us, Kmart and Walmart, and heavy TV advertising in the fall. (There are rumors about a consumer mail-in offer this fall similar to the one that introduced Boba Fett and Bossk figures.)

"We feel we are making great toys for kids," says Hall, stating that the line is primarily aimed at



boys ages five to 11, "and we know that collectors and *STAR WARS* enthusiasts will like them. They're quite particular; I don't think they glom on to just anything. These are toys for kids, but we've been careful to have the realism and authenticity [that adult collectors] are going to demand. So we think all *STAR WARS* fans will really enjoy them." ☺

FROM REAR: ORIGINAL TIE FIGHTER; HAND-PAINTED SAMPLE OF NEW VERSION; MANUFACTURING SAMPLE; EARLY PRODUCTION SAMPLE.

Their common bond of drawing, comics and *The Empire Strikes Back*

BY KEVIN FITZPATRICK

CAMPBELL / GARNER

IF THERE WERE MORE HOURS IN A DAY, J. SCOTT CAMPBELL AND ALEX GARNER would have more time for their passions: drawing comics and watching movies on cassette and laser disc. Yet the two young artists hardly have enough time to team up on the hottest comic book title in the country. Still, when a couple *STAR WARS* assignments came knocking on their busy studio door, they were more than willing to adjust their schedules. ▲ After all, *The Empire Strikes Back*—this issue's special theme—just happens to be Campbell and Garner's favorite movie in the *STAR WARS* trilogy. Both drawn to the dark side elements (they are big Darth Vader and bounty hunter fans), they jumped at the chance to first illustrate our cover and later to portray Bossk for a *STAR WARS* Galaxy Series 3 trading card. They may not be as well known to long-time *STAR WARS* enthusiasts as Drew Struzan (Campbell's favorite *STAR WARS* artist) or Ralph McQuarrie, but as rising stars in the comics industry, Campbell and Garner are eager to join the ranks of artists who have contributed their takes on a movie series they love so much. ▲ The dynamite duo of Campbell (on pencils) and Garner (inker) exploded onto the comics scene a little more than a year ago, teaming up on *Gen13*, a title created by Image Comics co-founder Jim Lee and his studio, Wildstorm Productions. Last year's five-issue mini series, an instant sell-out, preceded an ongoing monthly launched last March. ▲ The series—which is like *X-Men* minus the angst and soap opera aspects—follows a group of young people whose adventures began when they volunteered for a government science program that turned out to be a top-secret breeding ground for super humans. They escaped, and amid lots of fighting and splash pages, the good guys ultimately won. Now the *Gen13* characters live in a San Diego beach house and work for a mysterious government agency—and play video games and go to raves. ▲ Living imitations of their art, Campbell, 22, and Garner, 24, also happen to live in San Diego, play video games and work for a mysterious company. Typically, they toil until the wee hours and sleep past noon. After recently finishing their *STAR WARS* pieces and the next few issues of *Gen13*, they packed



led us to this issue's cover artists, J. Scott Campbell & Alex Garner

SNEAK PEEK OF
CAMPBELL AND
GARNER'S
BOSSK, TO BE
FEATURED IN
TOPPS' UP-
COMING STAR
WARS GALAXY
3 SERIES.

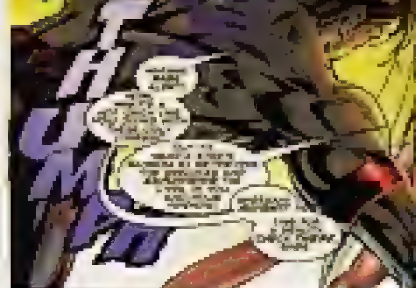
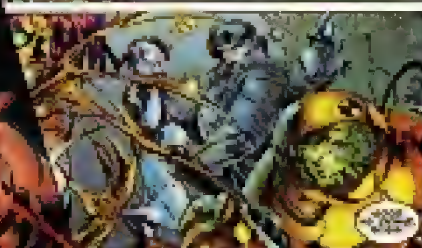
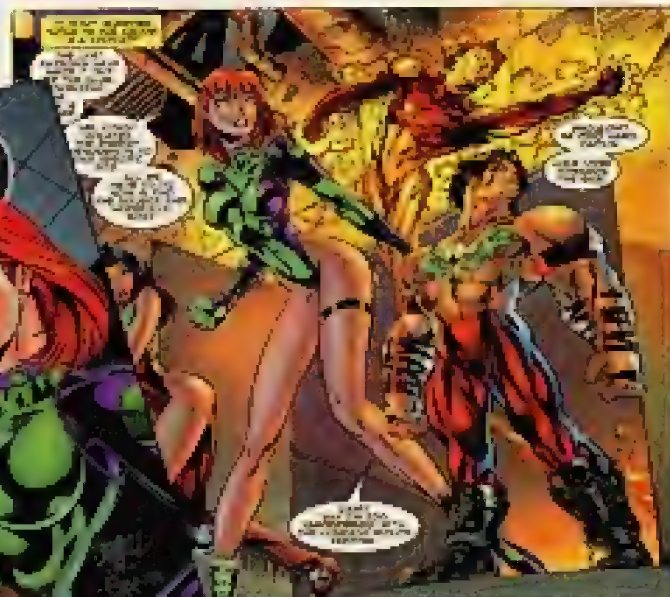


CAMPBELL: LARRY NEE; GARNER: COURTESY OF WOLFFORD



their bags for a two-week European trek—but they couldn't leave town without first talking to SWGM about being *STAR WARS* fans.

"*STAR WARS* had the single greatest influence on my career, which is telling stories and drawing fantastical characters," Campbell explains. "I guess my exposure to *STAR WARS* at age five pretty much peaked my interest in the entertainment genre. I'm sure *STAR WARS* had a lot to do with what made me want to draw and mess around with characters. If I hadn't seen *STAR WARS* then, who knows what I'd be doing now? It's comparable to a five year old seeing his first basketball game

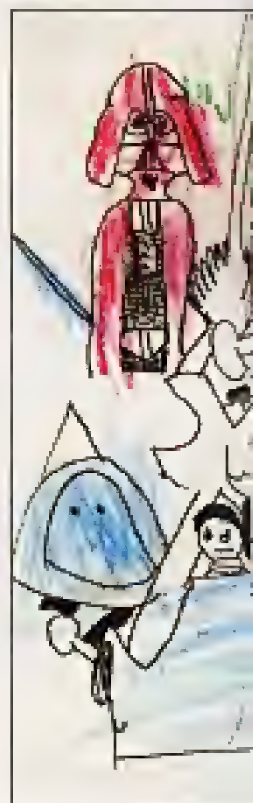


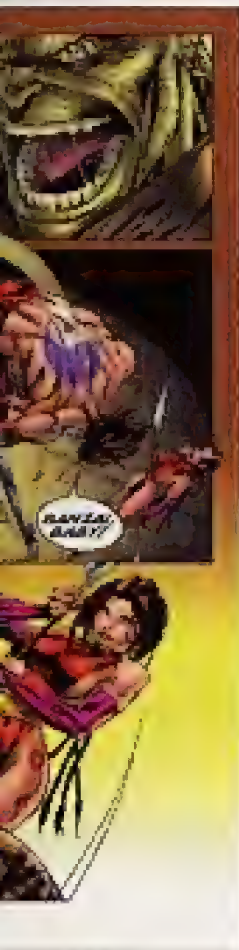
and then wanting to become a basketball player. I may not be making movies, but I'm doing something that definitely was influenced by *STAR WARS*."

Campbell hails from Colorado, Garner from Texas. Besides growing up *STAR WARS* fans and comics readers, they both were bitten by the drawing bug at an early age, too. In fact, Campbell's mom still has her son's *STAR WARS* drawings that he did 17 years ago.

The serendipitous circumstances that brought them together as an art team began falling in place about two years ago. Campbell was working in Denver as a graphic artist, while Garner was in Dallas doing computer animation. Coincidentally, they each saw an announcement in Jim Lee's *WildC.A.T.s* about a talent search for new artists. They sent samples of their work, and the next thing they knew, Lee was offering them dream-of-a-lifetime jobs drawing comics in sunny San Diego. Before long, Lee showed them plans for *Gen13*, and the rest is, as the old saying goes, history. And, to boot, the pair became fast friends.

Their fates continued to cross when Campbell and Garner revealed their mutual long-time *STAR WARS* admiration, but especially for *The Empire Strikes Back*. "Empire may be my favorite movie of





THE DEBUT
ISSUE OF *GEN13*,
FEATURING A
KID CAST OF
GENERATION-X
SUPERHEROES
WHO THROW
ONE-LINERS
AND PUNCHES,
WAS AN
INSTANT BEST-
SELLER.

A 5-YEAR-OLD
CAMPBELL WAS
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WITH *STAR
WARS* HE DREW
THIS PICTURE,
WHICH HIS
MOM PROUDLY
SAVED.



all time," says Garner. "I first saw it when I was 10, and it immediately struck a chord with me."

Not surprisingly, Campbell is on the same wavelength as his colleague. "The majority of people I run into tend to agree with me that *Empire* is the best of the *STAR WARS* movies," he says. "My dad disagrees—he says it doesn't have a beginning or end, just the middle—but to me it felt like the story was so tight in *Empire*. The characters were more developed, you got to see the personalities come out of the characters that were in the first film. Plus, I just love the walker scene! I mean, *bam*, right in the first half-hour of the movie you're in this major fight scene. I like all the concepts in *Empire*—the idea of Darth Vader kicking butt and the whole Cloud City."

Garner, too, is a major Vader fan. "I really liked Darth Vader in *Empire*," Garner says. "He's my favorite character in the whole trilogy. I find him fascinating. He looks cool, and is

probably the greatest screen villain of all time. And the big shocker at the end... when I was 10 and found out Vader was Luke's father, that was just the most incredible thing."

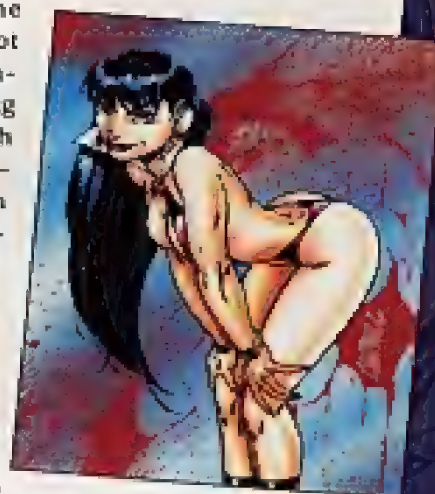
SWGM learned of Campbell and Garner's shared *Empire*-philia about the same time we decided to do a 15th anniversary homage to the film. After they got the cover assignment, the first thing they did was watch the movie again—for about the 50th time. "I paid attention to elements I could bring to the cover," Campbell says. "I also flipped through my trading cards and other reference material to figure out how to epitomize the movie. I wanted to do one of those movie poster-style montages like Drew Struzan's."

"Darth Vader was very difficult," he continues, "because the only way to draw him is full-on and make him look exact. All the minor things make a difference, because if you're slightly off, I don't think it looks like him. Lando was a nice surprise because he came out larger than I planned... and still looks like Billy Dee Williams."

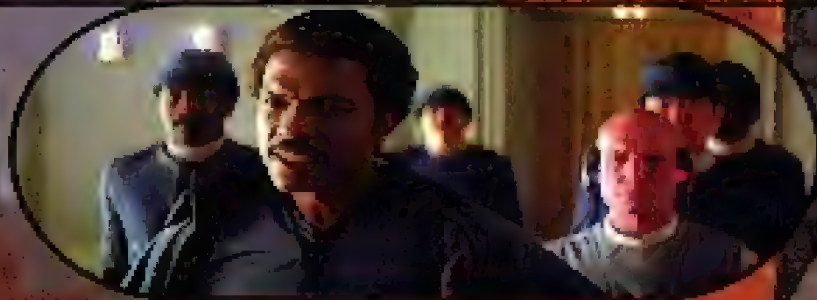
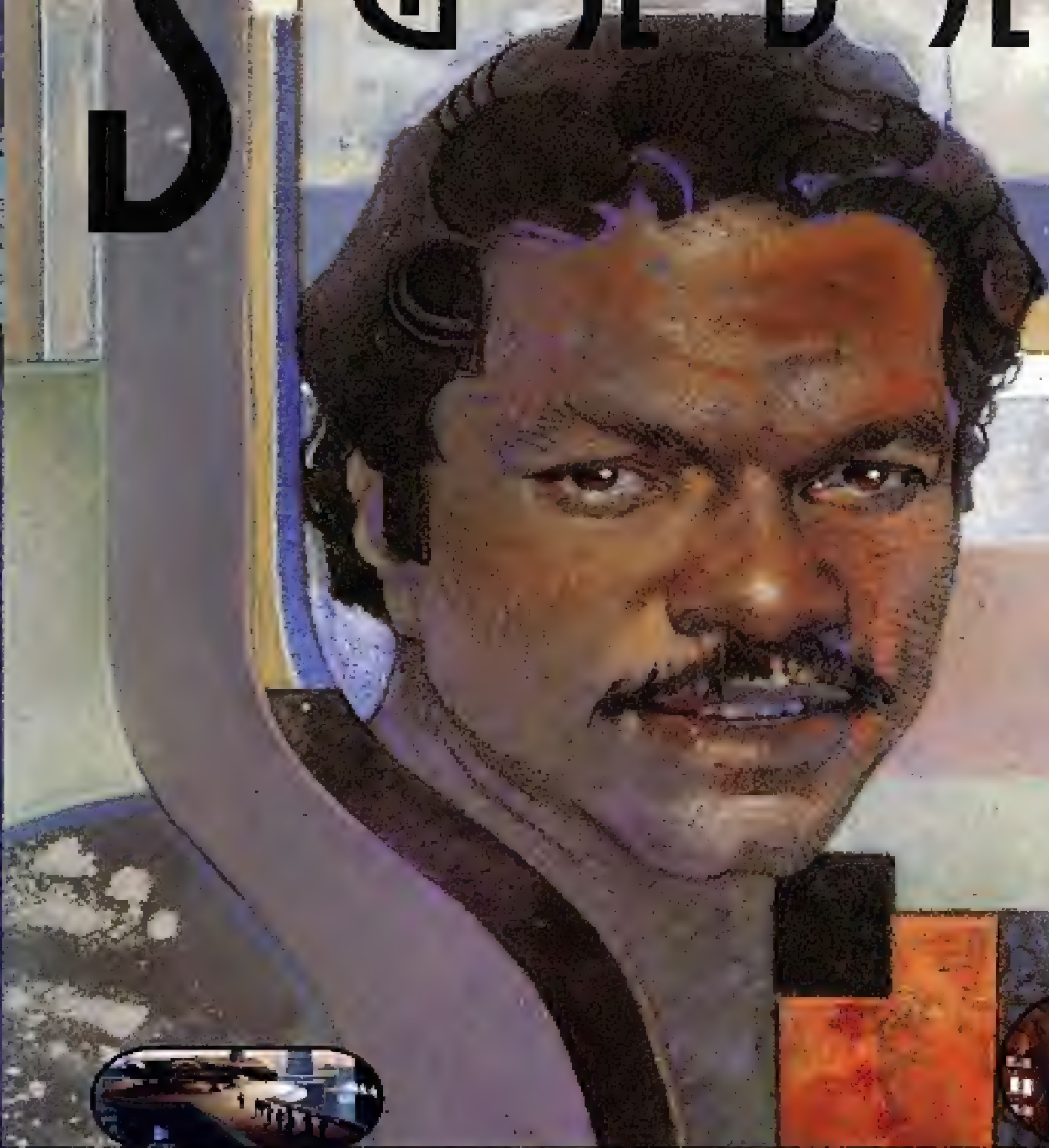
With their *STAR WARS* projects in the can, Campbell and Garner are busy keeping the quality high on *Gen13*, whose good-vs.-evil themes and characters, Garner asserts, are similar to those in *STAR WARS*. "There is the children-parents aspect," he says. "I always look at the trilogy as having a major underlying theme being the father-son estrangement. I think the major correlating pattern between *Gen13* and *STAR WARS* is that you have kids who don't know their parents, these 'clouded in mystery' orphans just like Luke. They have to find their past and explore it. Also, you can compare the special powers of the Force, which Luke got from [his father] Anakin, and the special powers the *Gen13* kids got from their parents."

Don't rule out future *STAR WARS* work from Campbell and Garner, but right now they want to focus on their hot comics series. "I don't think I'll ever take our success lying down," Garner says. "I'll always strive to do better. It feels great, but it presents ever greater challenges ahead." ☺

FANS CAN
BARELY GET
THEIR HANDS
ON CAMPBELL'S
HOT CHASE
CARD FROM
TOPPS' VAM-
PIRELLA SET.



STARS



T. Neisen

UNUSUAL SUSPECTS IN DISGUISE

BILLY DEE WILLIAMS PLAYED THE ROLE
OF DAREDEVIL MERCENARY LANDO CALRISSIAN,
BUT THESE DAYS HE'S MUCH MORE DOWN TO EARTH

BY JOHN O'MAHONY

ART BY TERESE NIELSEN

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO IN *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*, LANDO Calrissian looked too cool and oh-so in control piloting the *Millennium Falcon* around the planet Bespin and its Cloud City of which he was the Baron Administrator. Like his old pal, running mate and sometimes rival Han Solo, Lando was a smooth-talking maverick who adroitly bucked the Empire, although Lando ran a Tibanna-gas mining operation instead of a smuggling business. Three years later, Lando didn't miss a beat when, with copilot Nien Nunb at his side, he reprised his role in *Return of the Jedi*, yet this time he turned the tables on the Imperial forces and joined the Rebellion.

As it turns out, Billy Dee Williams, now 58, was the ideal actor to portray Lando in those *STAR WARS* movies. Not only do his good looks and charm suit the swashbuckling character, but Billy Dee's own complex personality befits Lando's complicated life.

Born in Harlem, New York, on April 6, 1937, Williams was just seven years old when he began acting on Broadway. He went on to study the Stanislavski "Method" of acting under Sidney Poitier and Paul Mann at New York's famed Actor's Workshop, making his film debut in *The Last Angry Man* in 1959 and his adult return to Broadway two years later in *The Cool World*. Of his performance, also in '61, in Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*, one theater critic said he was "light-footed as a dancer" and "could not be more right."

Williams now insists that he was destined to act, though he never consciously set about to make stage and film work his career. It was, however, a destiny that ran in the family. His mother was an opera singer, and the young Billy Dee was a shy, withdrawn daydreamer, drawn to such flamboyant cinema icons as

Rudolph Valentino, who was best known for his romantic roles.

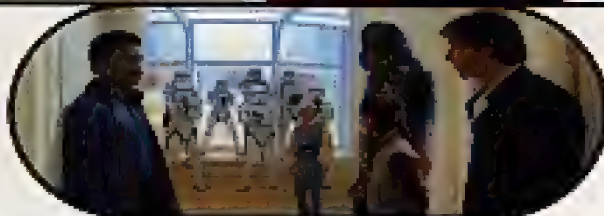
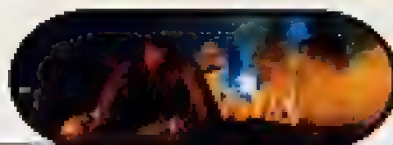
"When I was a kid, I used to make dolls and create my own scenes and plays for them," Williams says. "I liked the idea of drama and playing characters."

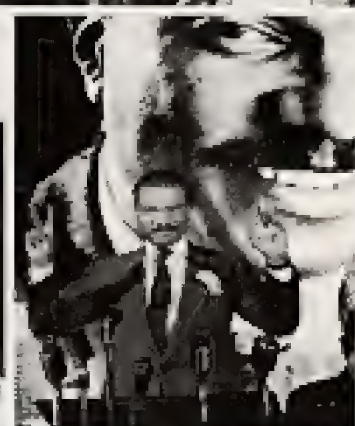
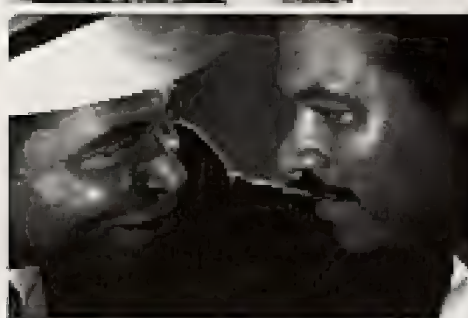
"Valentino was the epitome of the romantic hero then," he adds, flashing a loveable Lando-esque grin, "and if you're going for that [image], you may as well go for the top of the line."

As a teenager, Williams recalls, he didn't know what to do with his life. "I knew I wanted to do something creative. Like most kids, I was just in search of my real destiny... and it turned out to be acting."

After his auspicious introduction to the actor's life, Williams' star tumbled. Perhaps the race-conscious Sixties were to blame. Talking about the problem he had getting roles in those turbulent times, Williams describes himself then as a "mongrel... always too dark for white roles or too light for black parts."

Williams fell into a prolonged depression, brought on by his lack of success combined with





**CLOCKWISE
FROM UPPER
LEFT: IN *LADY
SINGS THE
BLUES*; WITH
ANTHONY
PERKINS IN
MAHOGANY;
WITH JAMES
EARL JONES IN
*THE BINGO LONG
TRAVELING
ALL-STARS AND
MOTOR KINGS*;
IN *BATMAN*.**

the failure of his first two marriages. It was his "lowest ebb," he says, thinking back. His rebirth came with the help of a "spiritual master" who introduced him to meditation and Eastern mystical philosophy. He consequentially formed lasting beliefs that have helped him deal with the "vicissitudes of life"—like recently when, after playing Harvey Dent in the first two *Batman* movies, he lost out on the role to Tommy Lee Jones in the new *Batman Forever*.

"It turns out that if you don't have a hit movie... well, directors go after those [actors] who have hit movies or awards," Williams says, shrugging. "I'm unhappy about it, but I understand why it happened, and there's no reason to become bitter about it. That's the way it is."

By 1967 Williams had put the past behind him and returned to acting, beginning with small parts that led to a breakthrough in 1971 with the ac-

claimed TV movie *Brian's Song* and later *Lady Sings the Blues* (1972) and *Mahogany* (1975). Billy Dee had achieved star and sex-symbol status by the time he landed the Lando role—which, not surprisingly, is the one that's stuck with him longer than any other.

He's still greeted by fans who can only remember him as the debonair Lando Calrissian. They still see Lando, with his purple cape flowing, affably greeting Han, Leia, Chewie, Threepio and Artoo upon their arrival on Bespin—only to later double cross them, after he was double-crossed by Darth Vader. That two-timing business, Williams adds with a laugh, has sometimes led to perception problems among fans.

"There's always been a lot of misunderstanding about Lando's character," he says. "I used to pick up my daughter from elementary school and get into arguments with little children who would accuse me of betraying Han Solo."

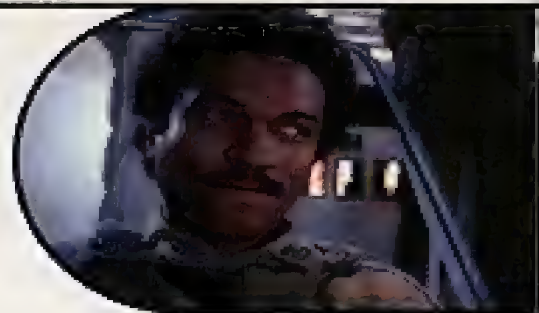
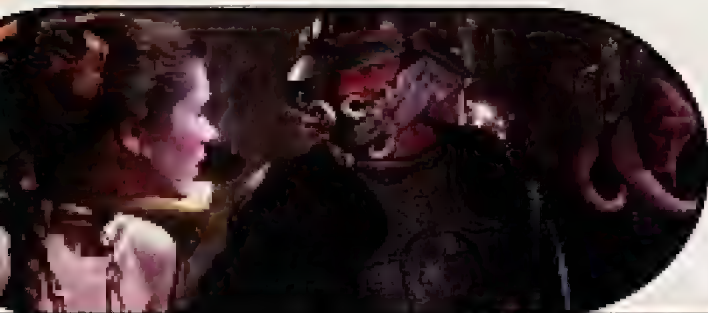
Kids haven't been his only accusers. He recalls being on a long plane trip and having to endure an angry flight attendant who felt much the same about Lando as his daughter's school friends. The stewardess seemed to conveniently forget that in *Jedi* he piloted the *Falcon* into the second Death Star and fired the blast that obliterated it—and the Empire's evil plot to wipe out the Rebellion.

The enthusiasm of die-hard *STAR WARS* fans fascinates Williams. He first realized its intensity, he remembers, while on location in the Arizona desert to shoot scenes for *Jedi*. It supposedly was a secret location, yet fans still turned up, some going so far as to hire planes to catch an aerial glimpse of the action.

"It's amazing that the fans often know more [about the *STAR WARS* movies] than the people who worked on them," he remarks. "People come and tell me things I wasn't even aware of."

Over the years, Williams has remained casual about *STAR WARS* and his involvement in the saga. He's stayed away from fan gatherings, and the last time he saw either of the movies he appeared in was a year ago on TV. He doesn't feed into the rumor mill, which has long been abuzz over a purported alternative ending to *Jedi* in which Lando dies ("I don't know anything about that"). Nor does he care to talk about how he got along with the other actors and the directors ("We had a very pleasant working relationship").

However, one thing clearly comes across when he talks about his *STAR WARS* experience: He ad-



mires George Lucas, and the two have maintained contact over the past decade and a half, most recently at George's birthday party last year.

"He's created a wonderful family," Williams says of Lucas. "People are devoted to him and he's devoted to the people who have worked with him. He's one of the extraordinary people of the 20th century."

Of the three *STAR WARS* movies, Billy Dee's favorite is *The Empire Strikes Back*. "All three worked beautifully, but that one had a certain flow the rest didn't have."

Of course, it's in *Empire* that Williams had his meatiest role. "I had hoped Lando would have been developed more in *Return of the Jedi*, but I think George was faced with trying to resolve this particular trilogy. It was a big job, and a tough one to do."

For Williams' part, playing Lando was tough because of his inability to deal with technology, particularly when filming scenes that later had special effects added to them. "My difficulty was trying to make sense of the dialogue," he says. "I had to do it piece by piece. It often required a few takes because there was a lot of blue screen going on. There were times when I couldn't get the technical lines together. I had to ask George, 'Please, throw the lines to me,' and I would repeat them. It can be exciting, but it can also be quite tedious."

When it comes to reflecting on his role as Lando—the one, he admits, that made him "all my money"—Williams' take on the character may surprise fans who aren't aware of his still-keen sense of defining his life by his color.

When he first read the *Empire* script, Billy Dee says, he was immediately attracted to the character, not just because Lando was an attractive swashbuckler with a sense of humor, but because he was black. "One of the things that ran through my mind was the question of black and white, evil and good," says Williams. "Darth Vader was evil and [dressed in] black—in that cowboy sense of white and

THESE DAYS, WILLIAMS HAS HIS MIND ON PAINTING MORE THAN ACTING.



black hats—so I thought the introduction of Lando, a black man on the side of goodness, clarified things in that area."

Forty-three years old when *The Empire Strikes Back* was released, Williams now lives in Los Angeles with his third wife, Teruko Nakagami. He still acts—his most recent credits include HBO's *Triple Cross*, CBS' *Falling for You* and guest appearances on CBS' *Lonesome Dove* series—but since 1988, when he returned to New York for a part in the Broadway hit *Fences*, painting, another early passion, has become a much more important creative outlet.

"I played around with [painting] and procrastinated for a lot of years, but I knew I would never give it up," says Williams, who, as a teenager earned a scholarship to the National Academy of Fine Arts and Design. "I need to do it now. To me it's all a part of moving on and keeping my life going."

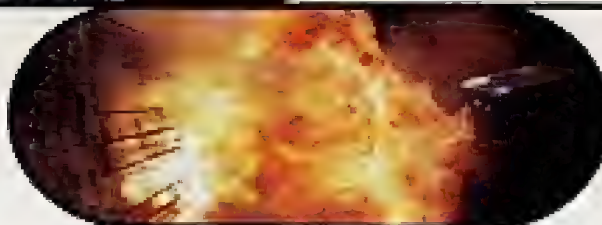
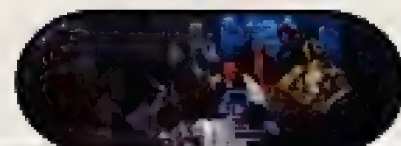
Encouraged by his friend, the celebrated pop artist Peter Max, Billy Dee has recently painted canvases that were bought by such prestigious museums as the National Portrait Gallery.

His art, says Williams, explores dreams and emotions—the mysterious currents under the surface of everyday life. Ed-

ward Hopper, Frida Kahlo and primitive Mexican and African art are his main influences, and his mediums are oil, pastels and charcoal.

It's not known yet whether Lando Calrissian will be featured in any of the future *STAR WARS* movies, or, if so, whether Williams would be at all interested in donning Lando's purple cape once again. For the time being, Billy Dee seems content to focus on his life as an actor and artist. It may not appear as exciting as guiding a starship through a space battle, but it's much better suited to his low-tech nature. ☺

John O'Mahony, an entertainment writer for The New York Post, lives in New York City.



ANNOUNCER: *Opening credits* **NARRATOR:** A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, there came a time of revolution, when Rebels united to challenge a tyrannical Empire. Now, it is a dark time for the Rebellion. Deep inside Cloud City, Luke Skywalker fights a desperate lightsaber duel against Darth Vader. Han Solo, encased in a block of carbonite, is in the charge of the bounty hunter Boba Fett. And, attempting to escape to the *Millennium Falcon*, Leia, Lando, Chewbacca, See-Threepio and Artoo-Detoo are trapped by a locked blast door, as Imperial stormtroopers open fire on them.

SCENE 10-1 CLOUD CITY CORRIDOR

SOUND: *The firefight comes up.* **NARRATOR:** Their only hope lies with the astromech droid Artoo-Detoo, who is trying to use Cloud City's computer system to open the door. **THREEPIO:** Artoo, the stormtroopers are closing in on us! If you don't get that door open, we're finished! **ARTOO:** *Beeps.* **SOUND:** *A blaster bolt comes at them.* **THREEPIO:** Well, TRY HARDER! **LEIA:** Lando! Stormtrooper by that doorway! **LANDO:** I see him, Leia— **SOUND:** *Lando fires.* **LEIA:** You got 'im! **SOUND:** *Another incoming shot.* **LEIA:** That only leaves a dozen or so... **LANDO:** Chewie! Watch that other corridor! They may try to come at us from two directions at once! **CHEWBACCA:** *Hoots.* **SOUND:** *More shots.* **LEIA:** Threepio, how's Artoo doing? **THREEPIO:** He is attempting to countermand the security program now, your highness. **ARTOO:** *Whistles.* **THREEPIO:** No, Artoo; we are NOT interested in information on the *Millennium Falcon's* hyperspace drive! It's been

THE EMPIRE STRIKES

In February of 1983, National Public Radio began broadcasting a 10-part dramatization of *The Empire Strikes Back*. This excerpt, from Episode 10, revolves around the pivotal duel between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, and includes material not in the movie. The entire radio play, written by Brian Daley, has just been published by Del Rey Books.

fixed. **SOUND:** *More shooting.* **LANDO:** Watch it! They're getting ready to fire at us! **THREEPIO:** Artoo! Just open the blast door, you stupid little lump! **ARTOO:** *Beeps.* **SOUND:** *The door whooshes up.* **LANDO:** He did it! Leia, the door's open! **THREEPIO:** I never doubted you for a second, Artoo! Wonderful! **LANDO:** Quick, everybody! Run for the Falcon! **LEIA:** We'll be out in the open, the whole way! **LANDO:** It can't be helped! **THREEPIO:** But what about Master Luke? Your highness, surely... **LEIA:** No, Lando's right; we have to try for the Falcon. We can't do anything for Luke here! **ARTOO:** *Whistles.* **SOUND:** *More shooting.* **THREEPIO:** What do you mean, Artoo, you'll "cover our retreat"? You're not a combat machine! **ARTOO:** *Beeps.* **SOUND:** *Artoo's extinguisher starts belching.* **THREEPIO:** What are you... **LANDO:** That droid's a sawed-off genius! He's laying down a smoke screen! **THREEPIO:** Your fire fighting aerosol! How do you think of these things, Artoo? **LEIA:** It won't last long. Chewie, get moving! Run for the ship! **THREEPIO:** And Chewbacca, please do keep in mind the fact that I am strapped to your back! You've exhibited little regard for my safety, thus far! **CHEWBACCA:** *(Moving off)* *Wailing.* **THREEPIO:** *(Being borne off)* *Hurry, Artoo! Don't be left behind! Oh, if only Master Luke were here! Hurry, Artoo!* **SOUND:** *Artoo, going after, signaling distress, as shots range around him. Fades.*

SCENE 10-2

CLOUD CITY CONTROL ROOM

SOUND: *Interior, Cloud City control room comes up. Luke's footsteps, approaching.* **LUKE:** *(Approaching)* All right, Vader... show yourself! How long do I have to hunt for you down here? I know you weren't hurt in that fall... **SOUND:** *Vader's breathing, off.* **VADER:** *(Off)* As you thought: I was not. You were prudent, in not rushing down headlong after me.

BACK



SOUND: Vader's saber activates. **VADER:** (Approaching) But caution will be of no help to you now. I've learned other things besides caution. **SOUND:** Luke's blade activates. **VADER:** You have learned wishful thinking, and a few partial insights! As for your lightsaber... there are many weapons available to one who truly commands the Force. **LUKE:** No one commands it! Not even you! **VADER:** You think not? Then observe that control bar... **SOUND:** The bar trembles and creaks as Vader's Force-commands tear it loose. **VADER:** The Force can tear it loose. The Force allows me to use it for any purpose I choose—even as a missile! **SOUND:** Relay breaks loose, zips through the air, smashing into a bulkhead. **LUKE:** (Reacts, ducking it) **VADER:** I can do the same with any object in this control room. Do you think you can evade them all? **SOUND:** Stanchion ripping loose. **VADER:** That stanchion, for example? **SOUND:** Stanchion flies, Luke's lightsaber hits it, sputtering, deflecting it. Stanchion clatters off the bulkhead. **LUKE:** (Indicating the deflection) I don't have to dodge 'em all. I still have my lightsaber. **VADER:** And can you parry missiles—and fight at the same time? **SOUND:** They cross swords. **LUKE & VADER:** (Indicating it) **VADER:** Can you defend yourself—and evade that connecting tube? **SOUND:** Power tube rips loose, flies, hits Luke a glancing shot, bounces. **LUKE:** (Groans) **VADER:** Or that? Or that? **SOUND:** Machinery being torn loose and hurled at Luke by Vader's will. Steam from broken main. Luke's saber, as he deflects them. **LUKE:** (Parrying the machinery, groggy) **VADER:** You see, Skywalker? You are helpless. **LUKE:** (panting) I thought you said... lightsabers. What's the matter? Lost your confidence? Changing the rules? **VADER:** "The rules" are what I ordain them to be! The contest may take any form! Defend yourself if you can! **SOUND:** Another piece of machinery is hurled. It glances off Luke and crashes through the viewport, shattering it. The air howls as it rushes out the opening into the shaft. **LUKE:** (Reacts to impact) The viewport... **VADER:** You see? The contest may take any form. Can you stand your ground now? **LUKE:** (Indicating effort of holding his place) Yes... I can... **VADER:** No! These winds will pull you through the viewport—into the reactor shaft. But they are nothing to me! NOTHING! And your strength will fail you! **LUKE:** No! **VADER:** Your willpower fails you! You can do nothing! **LUKE:** I can... CAN— (As he's blown out the shattered viewport, and falls down the shaft) Ah-hh! **SOUND:** Control room fades.

SCENE 10-3 FALCON COCKPIT

SOUND: Falcon's interior comes up. Sounds of engines being warmed up. **THREEPIO:** Oh, Artoo-Detoo, I thought that being strapped to the back of that great hairy beast, Chewbacca, would be the end of me! **ARTOO:** Tweedles. **THREEPIO:** He forgot to duck when he came up the ramp, and bumped me into the hatchway! Are you CERTAIN he didn't dent my cranial housing? **ARTOO:** Replies. **THREEPIO:** Well of course I've "looked better!" **SOUND:** Small arms fire splashing off the ship, off. **THREEPIO:** Listen! The stormtroopers are firing on the Falcon! If only our deflector will hold until we can blast off! **SOUND:** Engines rise as the Falcon lifts. **THREEPIO:** Oh! We're lifting off! I simply knew that Administrator Calrissian would get us into the air! Now, if he can just elude Imperial pursuit, we may still survive! **ARTOO:** Burbles. **THREEPIO:** Have you seen my other components lying about anywhere, Artoo? I expect you to get me reassembled without delay! **SOUND:** Falcon shudders as she's hit. **THREEPIO:** Oh my! We're being fired upon again. Oh, we must escape; we simply must! Master Luke will be lost without us. **SOUND:** Another volley. **THREEPIO:** We can only

hope that Administrator Calrissian is as good a pilot as Captain Solo! **ARTOO:** Beeps. **SOUND:** The ship is hit again. Falcon fades.

SCENE 10-4 CLOUD CITY REACTOR SHAFT

SOUND: Cloud City reactor shaft comes up: moaning of air through the shaft, rumbling machinery, turbines, distance. Vader's breathing, approaching. **VADER:** So, Skywalker: once again you have managed to save yourself. Fortunate for you that this gantry broke your fall. **LUKE:** There was more to it than luck. **VADER:** Oh, yes; your agility, your Force training. But they can help you no more. You have no room left for retreat. Or do you think to battle your way past me! **SOUND:** Vader's sword ignites. **VADER:** Look, there, down the reactor shaft! A long, long fall to Bespin. If you're not sucked into an exhaust port, or killed by an energy discharge! **LUKE:** I don't plan to take that fall, Vader. **SOUND:** Luke's sword flares. They fight briefly. **LUKE & VADER:** (Indicate the fight) **VADER:** You can only lose! It is inevitable! (With effort of shoving Luke) **SOUND:** Luke sprawls. **LUKE:** (Reacts) **VADER:** Get to your feet. You are beaten, Skywalker! **LUKE:** You killed Ben, and... you still didn't beat him! **VADER:** It is useless to resist! Don't let yourself be destroyed, as Obi-Wan did! **LUKE:** Don't worry—(Indicating effort of rising) I won't. (Effort of swinging lightsaber) **SOUND:** They duel. Burning, searing sounds as Luke's blade scores on Vader's arm. **VADER:** Ah-hhrrr! **LUKE:** Hal! How do you like it? The fire of a lightsaber blade? **VADER:** (Indicating effort of a vicious attack) **SOUND:** Quick, furious exchange. Vader's blade explodes instrument pod. Pause. **VADER:** I did not wish to damage you, but—you leave me no alternative... **SOUND:** Another passage-at-arms. **LUKE & VADER:** (Indicating it) **VADER:** (Indicates a slash, taking off Luke's sword-hand at the wrist) **SOUND:** The slash, sputtering explosive discharge of sword, etc. **LUKE:** (Screams as he's struck, groaning) My hand! MY HAND... **VADER:** No sword! No SWORD-HAND! No hope left for you, Skywalker! SURRENDER! **LUKE:** (Sobbing) No... NO... **VADER:** There is no escape! **LUKE:** (Moans) Yes—yes there is... **VADER:** Luke, don't make me destroy you. You do not yet realize your importance. You have only begun to discover your powers! **LUKE:** You might as well get it over with... **VADER:** Join me, and I will complete your training! With our combined strength, we can end this destructive conflict, and bring order to the galaxy! **LUKE:** Your kind

of "order?" I'll never join you! I'll die first! **VADER:** If only you knew the power of the dark side! **LUKE:** I've seen it! Hatred and fear and cruelty! **VADER:** Obi-Wan never told you what happened to your father...! **LUKE:** He told me enough! He told me you killed my father! **VADER:** No, Luke. I am your father! **LUKE:** No. No, that's not true! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! **VADER:** Search your feelings. The Force gives you knowledge. You know what I say to be true. **LUKE:** No, oh, no-oo! **VADER:** Luke, you can destroy the Emperor. He has foreseen this. It is your destiny! **LUKE:** I reject it! I RENOUNCE IT! **VADER:** Join me, and together we can rule the galaxy as father and son! **LUKE:** Stay back... STAY BACK! **VADER:** Come with me, Luke. It is the only way this can end. **LUKE:** There's one other... I can jump... **VADER:** Is THAT the wisdom of a Jedi? **LUKE:** I won't be the first to die—to keep you from winning! **VADER:** Luke, no! **LUKE:** I will never let you win, Vader. *(Falling off)* Never... **VADER:** *(Under)* LUKE! **SOUND:** Transition to underside Cloud City.

SCENE 10-5 CLOUD CITY EXTERIOR

SOUND: Exterior howling winds, distant tornadoes, etc. Quiet beeping of aircraft warning light on vane. Luke's sliding approach, along exhaust chute. **LUKE:** *(Moaning, reacting, as he approaches, sliding)* **SOUND:** Exhaust chute opens as Luke plummets out, landing on the small vane, POV, rattling it. **LUKE:** *(Moans, indicating effort of catching, desperate effort of grabbing vane. Moans)* **SOUND:** Vane rattles and clatters as Luke tries to pull himself back up, clawing at the

exhaust port. **LUKE:** *(Moans, pants as he tries to haul himself back inside Cloud City, scrabbling at closed exhaust port, and nearly falls)* *(Begins to focus breathing, control)* Ben... Ben, please let me hear you. Tell me what to do, Ben! I know you couldn't help me against Vader, but—Ben... Ben... *(Moans)* Leia. You're my only hope. You have to hear me! Leia! Leia! Leia! **SOUND:** Cross fade to Leia's voice. Falcon cockpit BG.

SCENE 10-6 FALCON COCKPIT

SOUND: Falcon's cockpit comes up. **LEIA:** Luke! LUKE! **LANDO:** Don't worry, Chewie. Before those TIE fighters can close with us, we'll be in hyperspace. **LEIA:** *(reacting to Luke's contact)* Lando! **LANDO:** Huh? What's wrong? **LEIA:** It's LUKE! We've got to go back to Cloud City! **CHEWBACCA:** Groans. **LANDO:** Hey! I thought we'd settled all that! **LEIA:** *(Urgent)* I know where he is Lando. He's on the underside of Cloud City. He was falling, but he caught hold of—something. I couldn't see what. **LANDO:** Leia, calm down... **LEIA:** He can't get back inside, and he can't hold on much longer. He needs us! **LANDO:** Well, what about all those TIE fighters on our tail? **LEIA:** Never mind the fighters! Chewie, we've got to do it, or Luke will die! Just do it! **CHEWBACCA:** Yowls. **LANDO:** Leia, Chewie; wait! Well, what about Vader? He's still there you know... **CHEWBACCA:** Howls, roars. **LANDO:** All right, all right, ALL RIGHT, Chewie! Comin' about! **SOUND:** Falcon's steering thrusters blast. **LANDO:** I hope you know what your doing, Leia. But I doubt it... **LEIA:** Lando, make your approach UNDERNEATH Cloud City! **LANDO:** Chewie! Gimme more power to the engines; cut back on the shields. We're gonna have to outrun those fighters if we're gonna make a pickup! **SOUND:** Engines blast. Brief transition.

SCENE 10-6A FALCON COCKPIT

SOUND: Cockpit comes up again. **LANDO:** Okay, Leia, show me where you thought. **LEIA:** Look up there! Someone's hanging from the vane! **LANDO:** You were right! **LEIA:** It's Luke! Chewie, slow down and ease the Falcon up under him! **CHEWBACCA:** Snarls. **SOUND:** Thrusters blare. **LEIA:** Lando, open the top hatch! **LANDO:** Listen, I'll go topside through the airlock and grab him! *(Indicates getting out of seat)* *(To Chewie)* Chewie, gimme that comlink! When I've get Luke *(Moving off)* get us out of here right away. Those TIEs'll be on us any second! **SOUND:** Falcon maneuvering slowly, easing up. **LEIA:** Easy, Chewie... good... *(To herself)* Just hang on a few seconds more, Luke. *(To comlink)* **LANDO, HURRY!** **LANDO:** *(Over comlink)* I havta cycle the airlock! **LEIA:** Override the lock controls. **LANDO:** Okay. Going up now. **LEIA:** Easy, Chewie. **LANDO:** Almost got 'im... Ease her up, Chewie. Hold it... that's good... we're there! Got 'im! **CHEWBACCA:** Hoots happily. **SOUND:** Alarm on control board starts bleeping. **LEIA:** Chewie, look! Sensor alarm! The TIE fighters are almost on us! **SOUND:** Intercom activates, as she contacts Lando. **LEIA:** Lando, get 'im back inside. TIE fighters approaching! **LANDO:** *(Over intercom)* Okay, I've got 'im in the airlock! Let's go! GET US OUTTA HERE! **LEIA:** Hit it CHEWIE! **CHEWBACCA:** Snarls. **SOUND:** Falcon's engines howl. **LEIA:** Those fighters are practically on us. Chewie, divert more power to the shields! **LUKE:** *(Off. Groans in pain.)* **LEIA:** Luke! **LANDO:** *(Off)* Leia, you'd better take him aft. *(Moving on)* I've gotta give Chewie a hand, here. **LEIA:** Oh, Luke... **LUKE:** *(Delirious)* Leia... you heard me! Vader... **LANDO:** *(With the effort of shifting Luke's weight)* Get 'im back to a bunk in the crew quarters. And hang on! **LEIA:** *(With the effort of shouldering Luke's weight)* I'll be right back, Lando... *(Moving off)* Easy, Luke. **SOUND:** Power door shuts. **LANDO:** *(Approaching POV)* All right, Chewie: set up the jump to lightspeed. **SOUND:** A cannon round rocks the ship. TIE howls past. **LANDO:** Here come the Imperials! Watch it! Get that jump ready! **SOUND:** Brief transition.

SCENE 10-7 FALCON HOLD

SOUND: Ship shudders to TIEs fire. **LEIA:** Oh, Luke, what have they done to you? **LUKE:** ...Vader... **VADER:** **LEIA:** Shh; hold still, Luke. I've got to get an auto-tourniquet onto your... your arm... **LUKE:** Ben told me Vader had KILLED, had KILLED my father... **SOUND:** Falcon's hit again. **LEIA:** *(Reacts)* Luke, I've got to get back to the cockpit *(Moving off)* Try not to move. I'll be back as soon as I can! **SOUND:** Brief transition.

SCENE 10-8 FALCON COCKPIT

SOUND: Door opens as Leia enters. **LEIA:** (Approaching) Lando, you've got to get us into hyperspace, or— **SOUND:** Another volley rocks the ship. **CHEWBACCA:** Reacts. **LEIA:** —or they'll blow us apart! **LANDO:** Almost ready; it took me a little fancy maneuvering to get around those TIE fighters, but we're coming out of Bespin's gravity field. **SOUND:** Alarm flashing, beeping. **LEIA:** What's the alarm for? **LANDO:** Take a look, right out there... **LEIA:** Imperial Star Destroyer. Only... it's ... **LANDO:** Yeah. Biggest ship I ever saw; must be three times the size of Cloud City. **SOUND:** TIEs swoop by, firing. **LANDO:** And the TIE fighters're still with us! Awright, Chewie: get set to go to lightspeed! **SOUND:** Switches being thrown, etc. **LEIA:** Assuming your people fixed the hyperdrive, Lando! **LANDO:** Don't worry; I gave THAT order myself! **LEIA:** Well, all the coordinates are set. It's now or never. **LANDO:** Now sounds preferable! Okay, Chewie! PUNCH IT! **SOUND:** Hyperdrive revs and coughs out once again. **LANDO:** Oh no... **LEIA:** Not again... I should've known... **CHEWBACCA:** Woofs. **LANDO:** They said they fixed it! They were SUPPOSED to fix it! Hey c'mon Chewie! Leia! It's not my fault! **LEIA:** Where've I heard THAT before? Chewie, what're you doing? Where're you going? **CHEWBACCA:** Carping, moving off. **LANDO:** He's gonna try to repair the hyperdrive; I've gotta keep those TIE fighters off our tail. **LEIA:** That Star Destroyer's closing on us... **LANDO:** And you know who's gotta be in it, don't you? **LEIA:** We can't let him catch us, Lando! I'm not sure what Luke is talking about, but he keeps mentioning Vader's name, over and over. **SOUND:** Ship jolts to blaster cannon. **LANDO:** I can't evade 'em forever... **SOUND:** Falcon maneuvers. **LEIA:** They'll have a tractor beam locked onto us any minute now. **LANDO:** And if we're REALLY unlucky, they'll take us alive. **LEIA:** We can't let them take the Falcon! Especially for Luke's sake. WE CAN'T LET VADER TAKE US! **SOUND:** Brief transition to aft.

SCENE 10-9 FALCON HOLD

LUKE: (On bunk, breathing irregularly, moaning) **VADER:** (Disembodied) Luke... LUKE! LUKE: Hmm—wha—FATHER! **VADER:** Son, come with me! RETURN TO ME! LUKE: Ben—why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you warn me? BEN... **SOUND:** Brief transition.

SCENE 10-10 FALCON MIDSHIPS

SOUND: Chewbacca, off, trying to repair the ship. Steam escaping, alarms, circuitry sputtering. POV.

Artoo, working on Threepio; tool noises, Artoo beeping. **THREEPIO:** Carefully, Artoo; carefully! Now, connect the relay switch to my leg. **ARTOO:** Beeps. **SOUND:** Throws switch. **THREEPIO:** There; that's much better! That's ONE of my legs back in a useful configuration! **SOUND:** Chewbacca, off, working and tooling, howling in despair. **THREEPIO:** Do you hear that noisy brute, Artoo-Detoo? **ARTOO:** Answers. **THREEPIO:** What CAN Chewbacca be doing? Why don't we just go to lightspeed? **ARTOO:** Chirps. **THREEPIO:** What do you mean, we "CAN'T?" How would you know the hyperdrive's been "sabotaged?" **ARTOO:** Beeps explanation. **THREEPIO:** The Cloud City central computer told you? Artoo-Detoo, how many times must I tell you not to trust a strange computer? **ARTOO:** Objects. **THREEPIO:** Oh, never mind! Just attach my other leg, this instant! **ARTOO:** Agrees. **SOUND:** Sounds of Artoo's endeavor. **THREEPIO:** Ouch! And watch what you're doing! Oh, there's surely no hope for us this time! No hope whatsoever! **SOUND:** Brief transition.

SCENE 10-11 FALCON COCKPIT

LANDO: Leia, get Chewie on the comlink. They're gonna nail us any second. **LEIA:** He's on. **LANDO:** (To intercom) Chewie, how's it goin' back there? **SOUND:** Door whooshes open. **LEIA:** Luke! **LUKE:** (Approaching) I'm all right, Leia. **LEIA:** I told you to stay in the bunk... **LUKE:** Where's his ship? Yeah; I see. He's there. **LANDO:** The Star Destroyer? **LUKE:** Vader. It's Vader. **VADER:** (Disembodied. Only Luke hears) Luke! It is your destiny! **LUKE:** No, it's not! (Softer) Why didn't you TELL me, Ben? Why? **LANDO:** "Ben?" (To Leia) What's he talking about? **LEIA:** Luke! You... you should be resting. **LANDO:** No point worrying about that now. Everybody: grab hold! The Imperials're boxing us in! **SOUND:** Falcon's engine blast. **LANDO:** (To intercom) Come on, Chewie! Get the hyperdrive working or we've had it! **SOUND:** Brief transition.

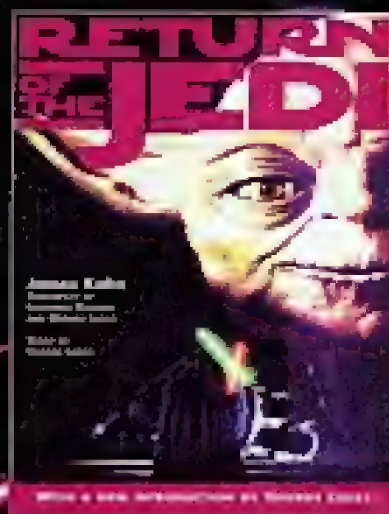
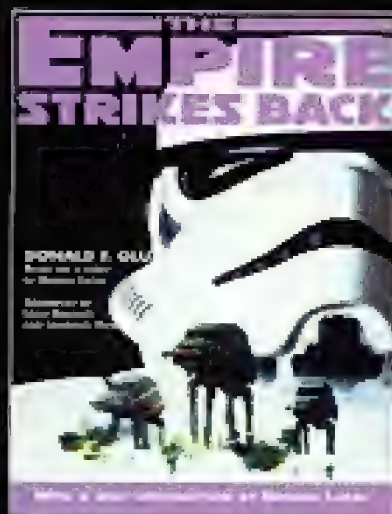
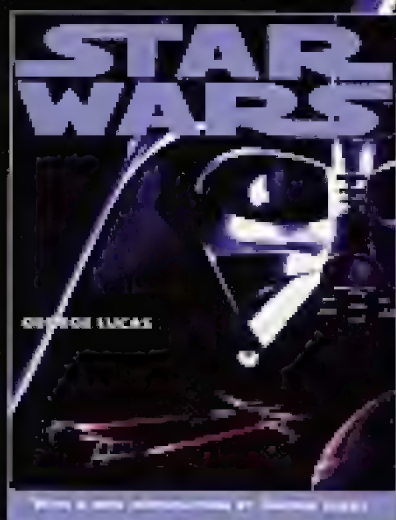
SCENE 10-12 FALCON MIDSHIPS

SOUND: Chewie still working, and swearing in Wookiee, off. Artoo's torch. **THREEPIO:** Artoo, will you please pay attention to what you're doing? Ow, my leg! **ARTOO:** Signals. **SOUND:** Torch shuts off. Artoo drops same, with a clank. **ARTOO:** (Moves off) Beeping. **THREEPIO:** Artoo, come back here! Pick up that tool! You STILL HAVE TO REATTACH MY OTHER LEG! **ARTOO:** (Off) Halloo's. **SOUND:** Artoo goes to work on circuitry of the Falcon. **THREEPIO:** Get away from that control wiring! You'll only burn yourself out again! You don't know how to repair the Falcon's hyperdrive! **ARTOO:** Thinks he does. **SOUND:** Artoo working, connecting, under next. **THREEPIO:** Oh no you don't! Chewbacca, perhaps, but not you! And in the meantime, I'm standing here, tottering, in pieces, and you're having delusions of grandeur! (Pause) What... **ARTOO:** Triumphant yoodle. **THREEPIO:** Artoo, what are you— **SOUND:** Positive contact, off, as Artoo's arm finds the sabotaged leads. **THREEPIO:** What are you meddling at now— **ARTOO:** Cheers. **SOUND:** Hyperdrive starts to kick in. **THREEPIO:** Oh, my goodness! You did it! The HYPERDRIVE! Artoo-Detoo—OOO! **SOUND:** Hyperdrive building. Threepio and Artoo upended. Artoo falls, yelping, sliding. **THREEPIO:** Artoo, you FIXED IT! You DID IT! **ARTOO:** Whistles. **SOUND:** Hyperdrive builds. **VADER:** (Over, disembodied) LUKE... It is your destiny! **SOUND:** Hyperdrive booms as Falcon rates lightspeed. Fades.

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"YOU MUST GO TO THE DAGOBAH SYSTEM, LUKE. YOU WILL LEARN FROM YODA... THE ONE WHO TAUGHT ME." LUKE CAN ALMOST HEAR OBI-WAN KENOBI'S WORDS AGAIN... AS HE HEARD THEM THE FIRST TIME WANDERING WOUNDED AND DELIRIOUS ON BLIZZARD-SWEPT HOTH.

SOMEHOW, HAVING REACHED HIS GOAL... IT SEEMS HARDER TO BELIEVE.

GETTING OUT OF HERE WILL TAKE SOME *DOING*, ARTOO! THIS SEEMS LIKE A STRANGE PLACE TO FIND A JEDI MASTER.

ALTHOUGH... THERE'S SOMETHING FAMILIAR ABOUT IT. I FEEL LIKE --



ILLUSTRATING

III ➔ *The Empire Strikes Back*, an expansion of the fanciful cosmos introduced in *STAR WARS*, provided comics illustrators with a truly memorable challenge. Although most of the artists were old hands at futuristic heroic fantasy—Marvel's villainous Doctor Doom and Darth Vader might have been cloned from the same bio-metallic gene pool—*Empire* boasted an elaborate, totally fictional universe of costumed characters, exotic environments, envelope-pushing technology and the most outrageous assemblage of aliens ever seen on the screen.

"It was a tough job, really awesome," recalls veteran illustrator Carmine Infantino, who first rendered the adventures of Luke and his fellow Rebels in the original Marvel Comics adaptation, edited by Archie Goodwin. "Everything had to be very precise, to match George Lucas' vision."

A particular artistic challenge was matching the likenesses of the actors to their characters. Although Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher and Harrison Ford could be creatively interpreted for the line-art form, their specific screen personas had to remain intact. Leia, for instance, had to be depicted as a princess-turned-freedom fighter, not an Amazon warrior goddess. And getting the Wookiee Chewbacca to look like something other than Lon Chaney Jr.'s characterization of Wolfman was a daunting assignment.

But all those obstacles were efficiently dealt with, and by the time *The Empire Strikes Back* entered its preproduction stages in the late seventies, comics/fantasy illustrators had mastered, for example, Han Solo's cocky grin and Threepio's patented look of quizzical hysteria. With *Empire*, though, they'd also have intergalactic bounty hunters, Imperial walkers and a gnomish Jedi Master named Yoda with which to contend.

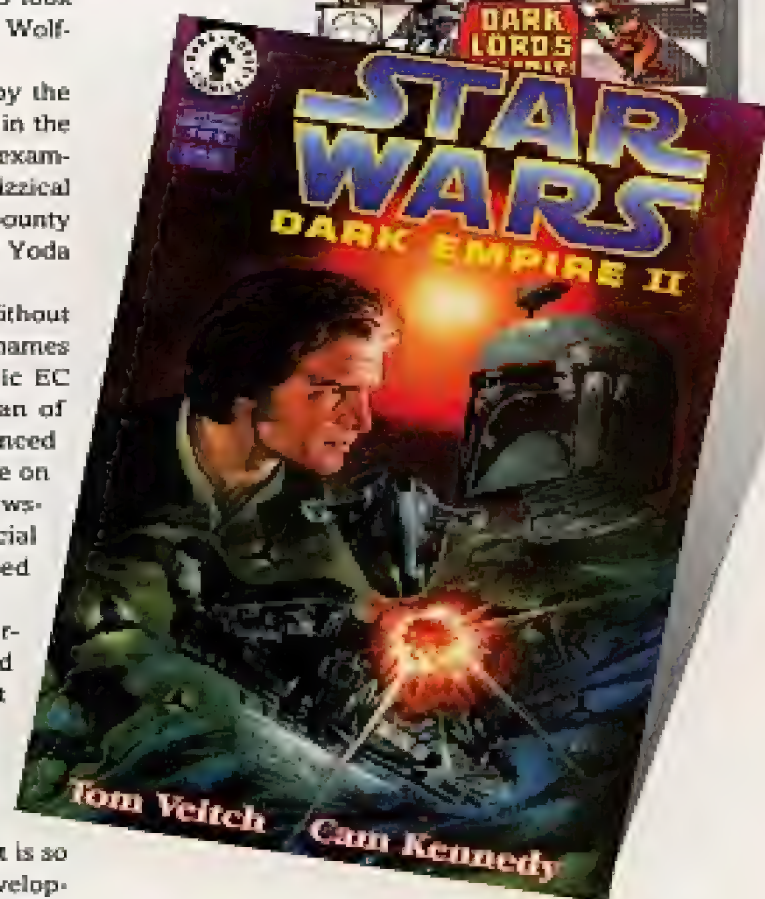
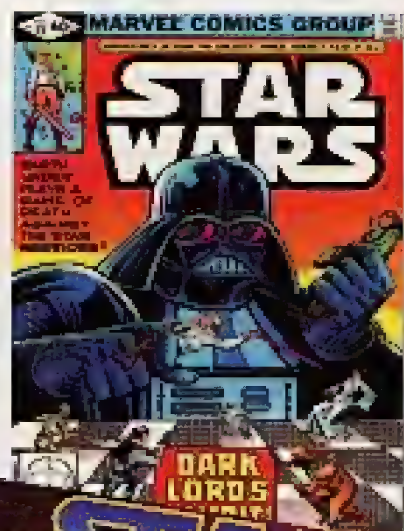
"*Empire* was my favorite of the three *STAR WARS* films, without question," opines Al Williamson, one of the most respected names in comics illustration. Williamson had worked on the classic EC science fiction stories of the 1950s and was also a veteran of ongoing Flash Gordon comic strips; his Alex Raymond-influenced style was a perfect match for what Lucas was trying to achieve on screen. In addition to illustrating the syndicated *STAR WARS* newspaper strip, Williamson was selected to helm Marvel's official comic book adaptation of *Empire*, the most eagerly awaited sequel in film history.

"What I didn't have, at least in the beginning, was good reference on Yoda," says Williamson, who more recently illustrated two cards in Topps' *STAR WARS* Galaxy Series 1. "I knew what his face and general body shape looked like, but I never saw him alongside another human being, to properly judge scale. As a result, the Yoda you see in my [Marvel] adaptation looks like a miniaturized version of himself."

"The film itself is so darned good," Williamson continues. "It is so well-paced, so well-directed, and the humanity part—the development of the characters—really takes it to a whole new level. It's funny... because I did the adaptation, I had read the screenplay and knew everything that was going to happen [in the movie]. But even though I knew in advance that Darth Vader was Luke's father, it still came as a surprise to me, because the suspense and build-up were so effectively handled."

OPPOSITE: A PAGE FROM WILLIAMSON'S *EMPIRE* ADAPTATION. RIGHT: INFANTINO RENDERED *STAR WARS* AND *EMPIRE* COMICS. BELOW: ONE OF DORMAN'S MANY DARK HORSE COVERS.

COMICSCAR



Star Wars comics artists talk about the unique creative thrills and challenges they met in rendering characters and scenes from *The Empire Strikes Back*

BY GARY GERANI

EMPIRE

**THEY'RE TAKING BACK THE GALAXY
ONE PLANET AT A TIME!**

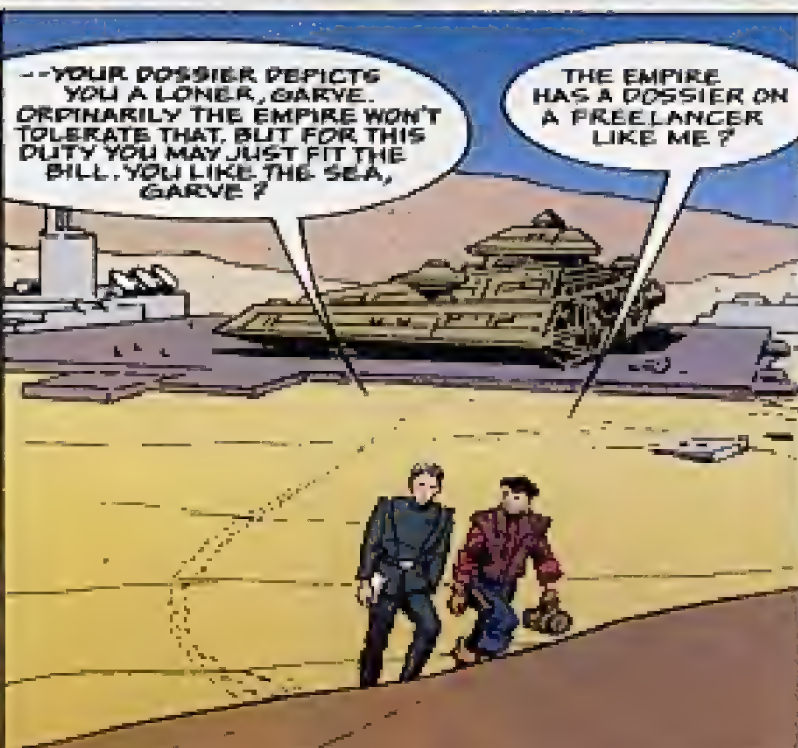
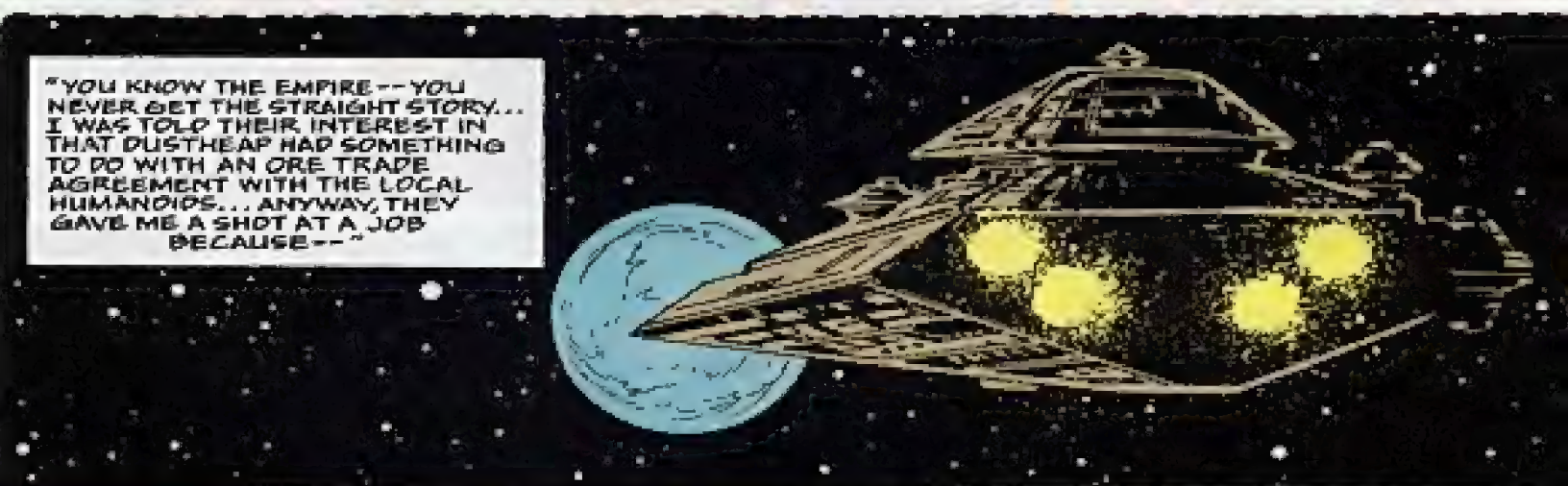
STAR WARS **X-WING** **ROGUE SQUADRON**

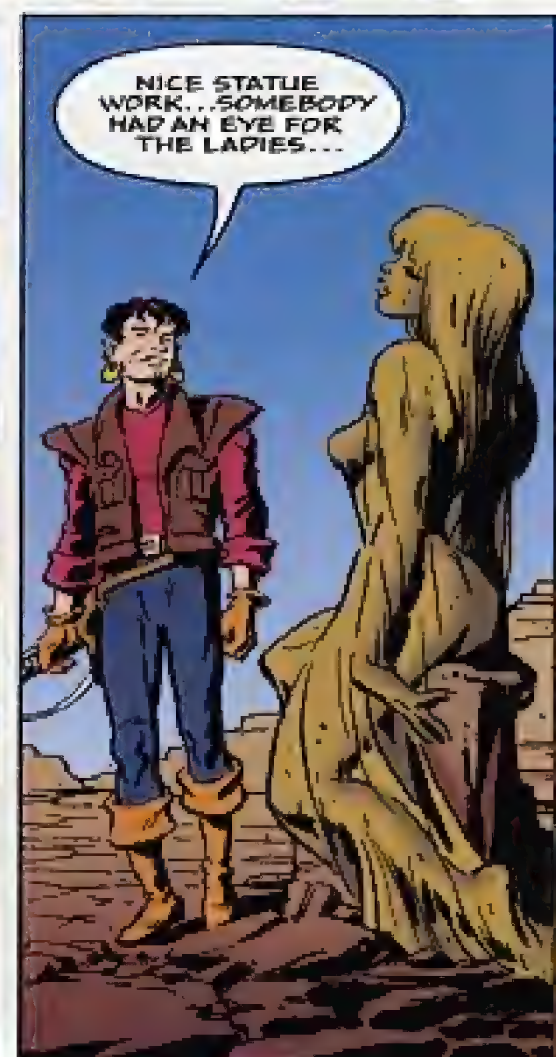
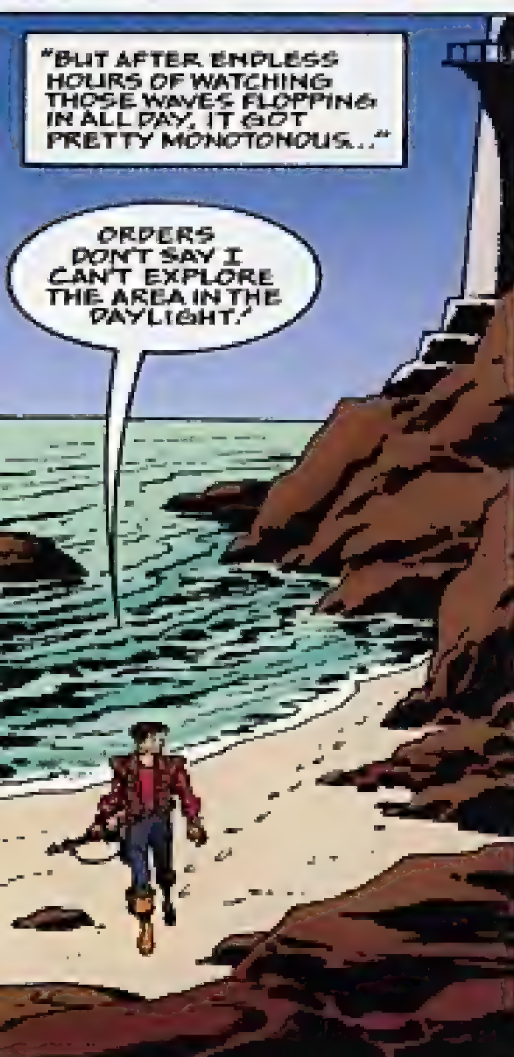


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"NIGHT AND FOG FELL
LIKE A CURTAIN ON THAT
LITTLE PLANETOID..."



"I GOT BORED OF SABACC
SOLITAIRE AND TURNED IN
EARLY THAT FIRST NIGHT..."



HLUH--? WHAZZAT--?

"I HAD NEVER SEEN A
VISION SO LOVELY IN
MY LIFE..."



STANG/
A FEMALE!



WHO ARE YOU,
BEAUTIFUL--?



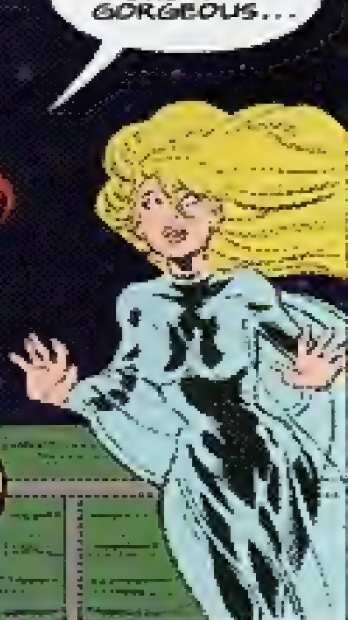
YOU GOTTA
BE FREEZING
OUT THERE! HOLD
ON, I'LL LET
YOU--



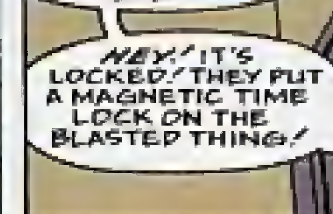
SORRY,
SWEETHEART,
AGAINST
ORDERS...



WHEW/
SHE IS
GORGEOUS...



THIS IS IDIOTIC!
SHE'S FREEZING!
SHE--



HEY! IT'S
LOCKED! THEY PUT
A MAGNETIC TIME
LOCK ON THE
BLASTED THING!



SORRY SWEETHEART--
THOSE IMPERIAL JERKS
LOCKED ME IN!

DON'T CRY BABY!
STANG! THIS IS
CRIMINAL!



"I FELL ASLEEP THERE
AT THE GLASS...
CENTIMETERS FROM
HER..."



MORNING!
SHE... SHE'S
GONE...

"I HAD SOME BREAKFAST
AND WENT EXPLORING
AGAIN... NATURALLY THE
DOOR OPENED FINE NOW..."



HEY!
WHO GOES
THERE?!



IT'S OKAY!
I WON'T HURT
YOU--!

HE WAS JUST HERE
A SECOND AGO--

WAIT A SECOND--
WHAT'S THAT?



A GROUP OF THEM...
CONSTRUCTING
A RAFT!

...STRANGE...



THEY'RE RUNNING!
SCARED TO DEATH!

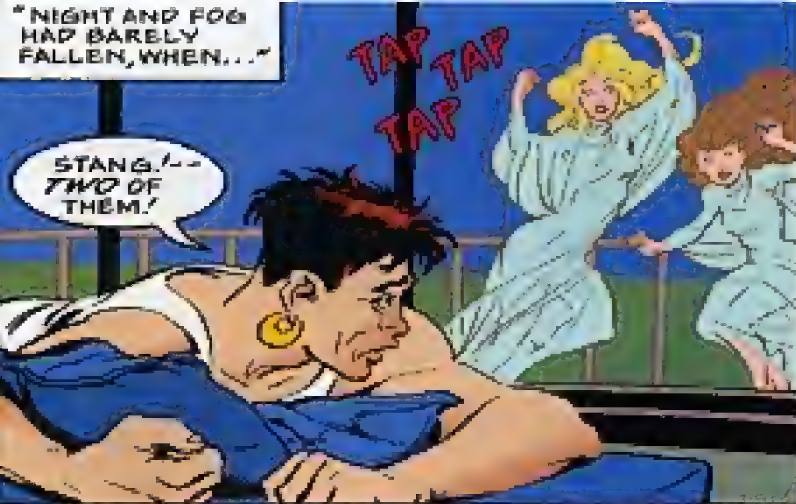
SAY, FDS ROLLING
IN... BETTER GET
BACK TO THE LIGHT-
HOUSE BEFORE IT'S
TOO THICK TO SEE...



NIGHT AND FOG
HAD BARELY
FALLEN, WHEN...

STANG!...
TWO OF
THEM!

TAP
TAP
TAP



"SUDDENLY, A SHIP'S
THRUSTERS CUT THE
NIGHT..."

THERE THEY
GO! RACING
DOWN TO
GREET IT!



...IN FACT...THOSE
LOOK LIKE PRISON
UNIFORMS."



'JELLYFISH COVE!'
IT'S A PENAL
COLONY."

—AND THESE
POOR GRUNTS
GOT THE
MAXIMUM
SENTENCE!



I CAN'T GET
OUT, GIRLS! I
WISH I COULD
BUT--

VAHRROON

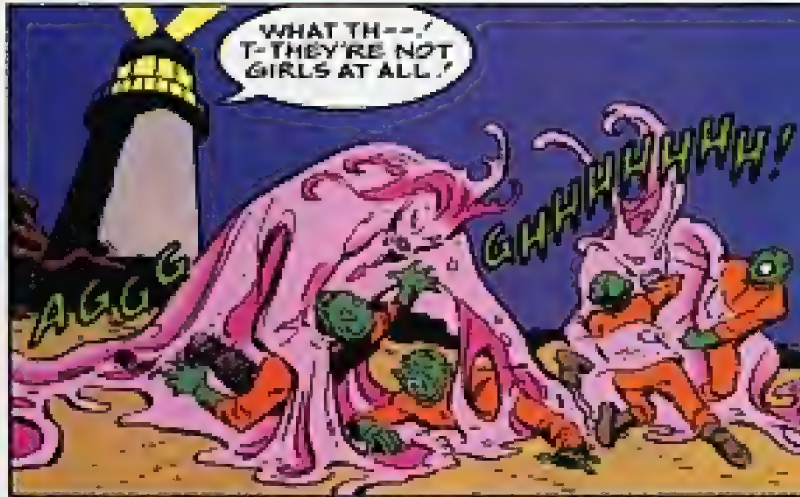


THAT CAN'T BE
MY RELIEF
ALREADY!

HEY...
THOSE AREN'T
IMPERIAL
UNIFORMS
ON THOSE
GUYS--



WHAT TH--?
T-THEY'RE NOT
GIRLS AT ALL!



TAP
TAP
TAP

NO! NO!
GET AWAY
FROM HERE!



"THE NEXT BRIGHT MORNING, I WENT BACK TO THE RUINS TO SEE WHAT I COULD DIG UP ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THESE CREATURES..."

"I'M JUST A GLORIFIED PRISON GUARD FOR AN IMPERIAL PENAL COLONY! MUST BE SOMETHING IN THE FOG THAT FOULS LAND-ING SENSORS--THAT'S WHY THEY USE THE LIGHTHOUSE BEACON."

--HEY...FOG COMING IN AGAIN...

--HUH--?

THE STATUES! THEY'RE ALIVE!!

YAGHHH! GET AWAY FROM ME!

THE SUNLIGHT! IT FREEZES THAT GELATIN TISSUE SOLID!

"I BARELY MADE IT THROUGH THE STEEL DOOR IN TIME..."

A NIGHTMARE... THIS IS A LIVING NIGHTMARE!

"BUT LATER...WHEN THE FOG CLEARED...THE SUN SHINING BRIGHTLY AGAIN..."

HEY! A SOLDIER! MY RELIEF! THEY'RE HERE!

YOU GARVE--?

CORPORAL, AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU! COME IN!

PAL, THIS IS THE WORST JOB I EVER SCORED!

I'M CORPORAL... BARA. GOT ANYTHING COOL TO DRINK, GARVE? IT'S A LONG WALK IN THAT SAND...

--EXCEPT ON FOGGY DAYS!



Playing EMPIRE GAMES

III► It's an ongoing debate: Which of the three *STAR WARS* movies is the best? Many argue for the first one, *A New Hope*, as it's now known. After all, it is the original and introduced us to the characters and conflicts between the Rebel Alliance and the Empire. Others swear by the third film, *Return of the Jedi*, with the Ewoks adding just the right combination of drama and comedy to boost it to the top. Although it's a tough call, I'm partial to the second in the trilogy, *The Empire Strikes Back*.

In *Empire*, we gain much more insight into the characters—for example, Luke's struggle with the dark side inside himself and Darth Vader's true identity. We meet several new characters who become critical to the survival of the Rebel Alliance: Jedi Master Yoda and Lando Calrissian. And we're transported to mysterious places such as Dagobah and Bespin. In the end, we're not too sure as to the fate of the galaxy; Han, frozen in carbonite, is being delivered by Boba Fett to Jabba the Hutt, while Luke, having had his severed hand replaced by a mechanical one, wonders how different are he and his father from each other.

There's one other reason why I particularly like *The Empire Strikes Back*. Its memorable scenes, characters and action are the foundation for several award-winning video and computer games.

The most direct translation of *Empire* into interactive entertainment is in the video game *Super Empire Strikes Back* for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System and Game Boy. In *Super Empire*, the battle between Luke Skywalker and the evil Empire continues as Luke learns the ways of the Force from Yoda and directly confronts Darth Vader. The game features more than 20 levels,

GAMEROOM each packed with a combination of familiar and never-before-seen aliens, enemies, boss monsters and locations.

Super Empire closely follows the plot of the movie. Players control Luke Skywalker, Han Solo and Chewbacca, in turn, as they make their way through the game's adventure. As Luke, players

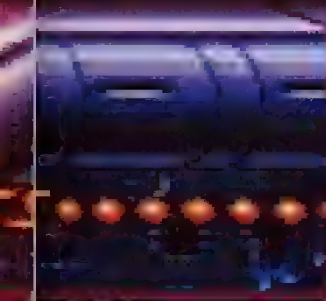
Video and computer adaptations of The Empire Strikes Back let players star in the movie's greatest scenes

BY SUE BERKEY



must survive with the tauntaun against horrible Hoth ice creatures, undergo rigorous Jedi training with Yoda on Dagobah to learn the ways of the Force and rescue Han, Leia, R2-D2 and C-3PO from the clutches of Darth Vader. As Han, players defend the Rebel base on Hoth against an onslaught of Imperial troops and pilot the *Millennium Falcon* through a 3-D asteroid storm while chasing TIE fighters in deep space. And as does the super strong Wookiee Chewbacca, players battle dozens of heavily armed bounty hunters in the Cloud City on Bespin.

"There's conflict and action in *Empire* that we knew would help draw players into a game based on the movie," says *Super Empire* producer Kalani Streicher. "Memorable scenes like Luke on the



tauntaun, battling the Imperial walkers and training with Yoda translated into great game play. For instance, Luke can use the assorted Force powers he acquires in the level on Dagobah to affect things through the rest of the game."

Super Empire also introduced several innovations to Super Nintendo technology. The game expanded the current capabilities of Mode 7—a technology that allows players to zoom over landscapes in first-person perspective—by featuring high-speed flying sequences over mountainous terrain. In those scenes, careful navigation is required to avoid crashing into hills and valleys while pursuing Imperial walkers in the snowspeeder on Hoth. Previously, Mode 7 was limited to travel over flat surfaces. Playing perspectives alternate between thrilling Mode 7 flight sequences and sideways scrolling. Three depths of playing fields create an interactive 3-D universe

FROM SUPER EMPIRE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: LUKE COLLECTS FORCE POWERS ON DAGOBAH; HAN TAKES ON A ZERO-G STORMTROOPER; THE APPROACH TO CLOUD CITY.

that is brought to life with digitized speech, movie sound effects and John Williams' original music.

More than any other title in the *STAR WARS* trilogy of Super Nintendo games, Super Empire features an array of stormtroopers and bounty hunters—some from the movie and others invented for the game—all with special weapons and abilities designed to make them deadly opponents. On Hoth, a variety of Imperial troops are activated to destroy the Rebel base. They include snowtroopers, the perfect fighting force for the icy planet; Grenadier troopers, who are protected by large alloy shields and toss small plasma grenades; Laser Cannon Gunners, who fire heat-seeking missiles; Air Assault troopers, also known as airtroopers, who use jet packs and ion guns in a deadly combination and lend support to the Imperial AT-ATs; and Zero-G stormtroopers, who



are encased inside powerful assault armor and equipped with a jet pack and ion cannons.

As in the film, *Super Empire* culminates in Cloud City with a lightsaber duel between Luke and Darth. To reach that climax in the game, players first must face an onslaught of bounty hunters. Dengar, armed with a flame staff, can spin it as an effective shield and thrust outward for a deadly long-range attack. IG-88, a fierce and independent droid well-suited for the role of an assassin, uses a twin freeze-wave rifle on his prey. Bossk, a lizard-like alien known for its hatred of the peaceful Wookiees, hurls a lethal plasma disk. Zuckuss, a tireless tracker, will brave any environment or terrain in pursuit of his quarry. 4-LOM, who usually teams up with Zuckuss, uses an ion launcher that disperses deadly charges over its target. Finally, the infamous Boba Fett employs an array of weapons against his victims, including an ion rifle, a freeze-wave blaster and a missile launcher.

Although *Super Empire* is the most direct interpretation of its namesake movie, other games also bring the film to gaming life. A striking example is the CD-ROM computer game, *Rebel Assault*. It follows the adventures of a young, hotshot Rebel pilot, Rookie One, as he undergoes flight training and engages in battle against the Empire. The player controls Rookie One in 15 different levels—from the canyons of Tatooine to the Death Star trench.

In one of *Rebel Assault*'s most exciting levels, Rookie One, charged with protecting the Rebel base on Hoth, straps into a snowspeeder and heads into the tundra. There he comes face to face with several towering Imperial walkers. Piloting agility and careful aim are the keys to survival as Rookie One weaves around the walkers and

**SUPER EMPIRE
BAD GUYS:
GRENADEIER
TROOPERS
(ABOVE) TOSS
PLASMA
GRENADES:
DENGAR (LEFT)
WIELDS A
DEADLY FLAME
STAFF.**

through their legs while blasting them into submission.

"In *Rebel Assault*, we really wanted to give the player the chance to experience things from the movie first person," says Vince Lee, the game's project leader. "The walkers are probably the biggest enemy from *The Empire Strikes Back*, and now the player gets to see them up close. This is the first time you get to see what the belly of one looks like, or to see its head inches from your windshield.

**IN THE CD-ROM
GAME REBEL
ASSAULT, THE
PLAYER IS
ROOKIE ONE.
ON ONE LEVEL,
INSPIRED BY
THE EMPIRE
STRIKES BACK,
HE PILOTS A
SNOWSPEEDER
AGAINST IMPE-
RIAL WALKERS.**



"Our games leave the player wanting more—whether that's the next level or the next game," continues Lee. "That's similar to what *Empire* did. The fate of Luke, Han and Leia, as well as the galaxy, is somewhat in question when the movie is over. That's why *The Empire Strikes Back* is such a natural for interpretation in games." ☺

Sue Berkey is a freelance entertainment writer based in California.

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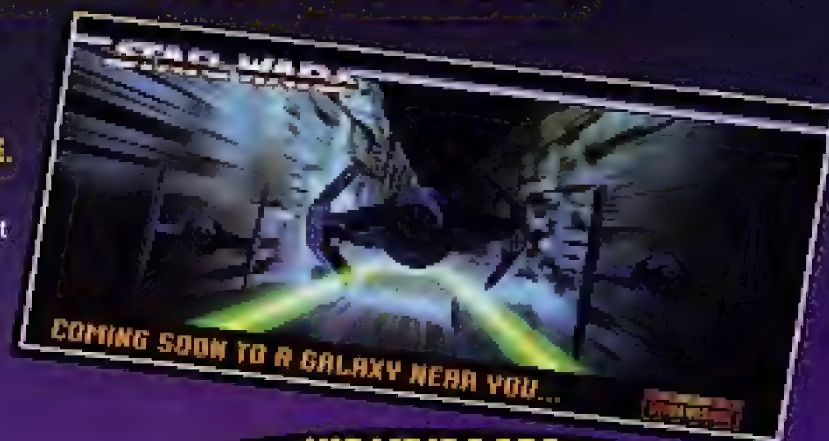
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HE GAVE... *FLAIR*

*FX wizard
Richard Edlund
recalls the
extraordinary
challenges he
and his ILM
crew met on
The Empire
Strikes Back*

BY MARK COTTA VAZ

► In the days when George Lucas' Industrial Light & Magic was gearing up to make movie history with *STAR WARS*, FX artists were at a crossroads between the promise of computer-controlled effects and the industrial realities of the photochemical world of cameras, celluloid film and optical printers. The early genius behind ILM's effects wizardry in those pre-digital days was the ability to bend Machine Age hardware to serve the emerging computer technologies. Such a piece of breakthrough equipment was the Dykstraflex (named for photographic effects supervisor John Dykstra), a motion-control track camera used for the miniatures photography in *STAR WARS*.

One of the architects of the ILM revolution was Richard Edlund, a first cameraman on *STAR WARS* and visual effects supervisor on *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* (along with Brian Johnson and Dennis Muren/Ken Ralston respectively). Edlund, who would eventually leave ILM to form Boss Film Studios, his own FX shop, remains a renaissance man adept at designing and building filmmaking hardware, composing a shot and programming a motion-control camera pass or spearheading a production effort. Unlike the techno-nerd stereotype, Edlund brings an artistic aesthetic to complement his technical expertise.

One of Edlund's creative influences was a youthful sojourn in Japan, where he was stationed during a stint as a naval photographer in 1959. During a three-year stay, he soaked up the language, literature and culture of that exotic coun-

fifties-era wide-screen process (see *SWGM #1*). With the format, Lucas would be able to create complex optical photography composites with a less appreciable loss in image resolution.

Edlund and others of that seminal *STAR WARS* team explored the back lots and warehouses of Hollywood for the once-failed technological hardware. Their treasure hunt would uncover the Anderson optical printer (which served ILM in good stead until its decommission in 1993), a VistaVision camera capable of running at 100 frames-per-second (fps) and an 8-perf, 35 mm Technirama camera purchased from Technicolor for a mere \$1,000.

STARFX



try. He was particularly drawn to the powerful graphic images of the Japanese woodblock prints, especially the work of Tsukioka Yoshitoshi.

One of Edlund's major tasks on *STAR WARS* was to turn a 30,000-square-foot industrial warehouse in Van Nuys, California, into a fully functioning effects studio. The space would ultimately be equipped with the newly acquired, once-discarded cameras and printers of the VistaVision format, a

To The Empire

"For *STAR WARS* we were able to get cheap equipment," Edlund recalls. "The beauty of VistaVision for model photography was that because the film was sideways [unlike the vertical direction in which film would normally run through cameras and projectors], the camera had a very small vertical profile, so you could get closer to surfaces. It worked as a good format for model photography. We also had so many shots and so little time that we went with small models; the X-wings were less than 18 inches, for example. It meant we had to shoot at very small apertures to hold depth of field."

The phenomenal success of the *STAR WARS* meant that Lucas' dreams of subsequent chapters in the saga would not only be expected, but virtually demanded by Twentieth Century-Fox and fans worldwide. The new films couldn't be mere sequels, either, but threads interwoven into the tapestry of an emerging, mythic story line. While *STAR WARS* had broken new ground in miniature photography, creating both an illusion of size (such as the opening shot of

the Star Destroyer) and speed (particularly in the X-wing and TIE fighter dogfights), the optical composites for *The Empire Strikes Back* would require a higher level of complexity.

Unfortunately, the 100-fps VistaVision camera that had served Edlund on *STAR WARS* was lost for *Empire*. Apparently, it was wrecked by a careless technician who had not properly oiled the hand-machined camera movement (that includes such components as the aperture, film gate and registration pin) through which film both runs and is positioned for each exposure.



FOR THE HOT BATTLE SCENES IN *EMPIRE*, EDLUND (RIGHT) HAD TO BUILD A HIGH-SPEED CAMERA AND OPTICAL PRINTING SYSTEM FROM SCRATCH. THEY WORKED SO WELL, EDLUND AND HIS FX CREW WON AN OSCAR.

"Of the three films, STAR WARS is a little grittier and rougher on the edges, in terms of effects, because it was our first effort. Return of the Jedi was the most incredible and intense, it had so much stuff in it.

But I still say Empire was the prettiest of the three movies. There's a beauty to it."

"Someone blew the movement, so there was no high-speed camera for *Empire*," Edlund says. "The *STAR WARS* equipment had been pretty rudimentary—we had roscope cameras, but no animation stands, for example. There also were no VistaVision cameras in the world that would run at the speeds we needed, so we had to build a high-speed, 100-fps camera and a 24-fps camera for the background plate photography.

"*Empire* was a big opportunity to rebuild the photographic process to contend with more difficult matting challenges. A good example was the Battle of Hoth. Instead of ships against black star fields, we had to put gray-white ships against white backgrounds, which required subtle, soft-edge traveling mattes."

Not only did ILM's work on *Empire* require a new camera and optical compositing system, but the two-year production occurred in the midst of the company's relocation from southern California to new digs upstate in the Marin County town of San Rafael. The move was the first step in Lucas' dream of creating a filmmaking community geographically and spiritually removed from Hollywood. It meant, though, that once again Edlund had to remodel empty warehouse space and fill it with the requisite tools of the FX trade, while also supervising the visual effects and coordinating the design and

before. But unlike the big, bulky cameras used to film such wide-screen epics as *The Ten Commandments* and *North by Northwest*, the *Empire* cameras were light, compact units. The film's production needs also necessitated that the background plate camera have a built-in heater so it could function in the sub-zero temperatures of Finse, Norway, which served as the icy environment of Hoth.

Breakthrough optical printing technology was also required to create as many as 500 *Empire* composite shots, up from 380 for *STAR WARS*. Edlund's answer was the "Quad," a computer-driven, four-projector head optical printer (as opposed to the standard two-head projector) equipped with a beam splitter (a mirrored device allowing a camera lens to record two separate images simultaneously). The key was a distortion-free optic lens system developed by Edlund.

"It avoided the traditional optical problem of getting perfectly fitting mattes," Edlund explains, "which we needed during the Battle of Hoth because of the problem of compositing light-colored objects against a light background. That sequence was probably the most technical and creatively challenging in the entire film.

"Of the three films, *STAR WARS* is a little grittier and rougher on the edges, in terms of effects, because it was our first effort. *Return of the Jedi* was the most incredible and intense, it had so much stuff in it. But I still say *Empire* was the prettiest of the three movies. There's a beauty to it."

Empire arguably has the most visually diverse and beautiful environments in the trilogy: the snowy wasteland of Hoth (created with location and stop-motion photography); dark, swampy Dagobah (created on a sound stage set at Elstree

Studios in England); and Cloud City on Bespin (created with a series of live-action and matte painting composites).

Empire was another blockbuster success, and the Empire Camera System, as well as Edlund and his FX team, earned Academy Awards. Since then, however, filmmaking and visual effects have changed mightily. Computerized effects—from virtual sets to synthetic actors—are seeping into the fabric of film. In many scenarios, film itself will be swept away and replaced by electronic data.

Many effects artists resist the notion of digital movie making. Edlund, though, welcomes the new technology. "I'm happy about the digital revolution," he says. "It's given us an incredible amount of creative freedom. Digital is a much more elegant technology." ☺

Mark Vaz, a writer for *Cinefex*, is a regular contributor to *SWGM*.



EDLUND (LEFT), STEVE GAWLEY (RIGHT) AND GEORGE LUCAS (BACKGROUND) SIZE UP A MODEL SHOT OF THE REBEL CRUISER FOR THE FINAL SEQUENCE OF *EMPIRE*.

building of what would become known as the Empire Camera System. With the shrug of an old pro, Edlund recalls that the deadlines were met because "we had no choice. Everything [construction at the new facility and the film's production] was going on at the same time."

The "Empireflex cameras," developed and built in a year, were the first VistaVision reflex cameras custom designed to meet ILM's motion-control photography needs and the first VistaVision cameras built since the format's glory days two decades

FINALLY, A SEQUEL AS GOOD AS THE ORIGINAL..



STAR ^{THE} EMPIRE STRIKES BACK ^{WARS}

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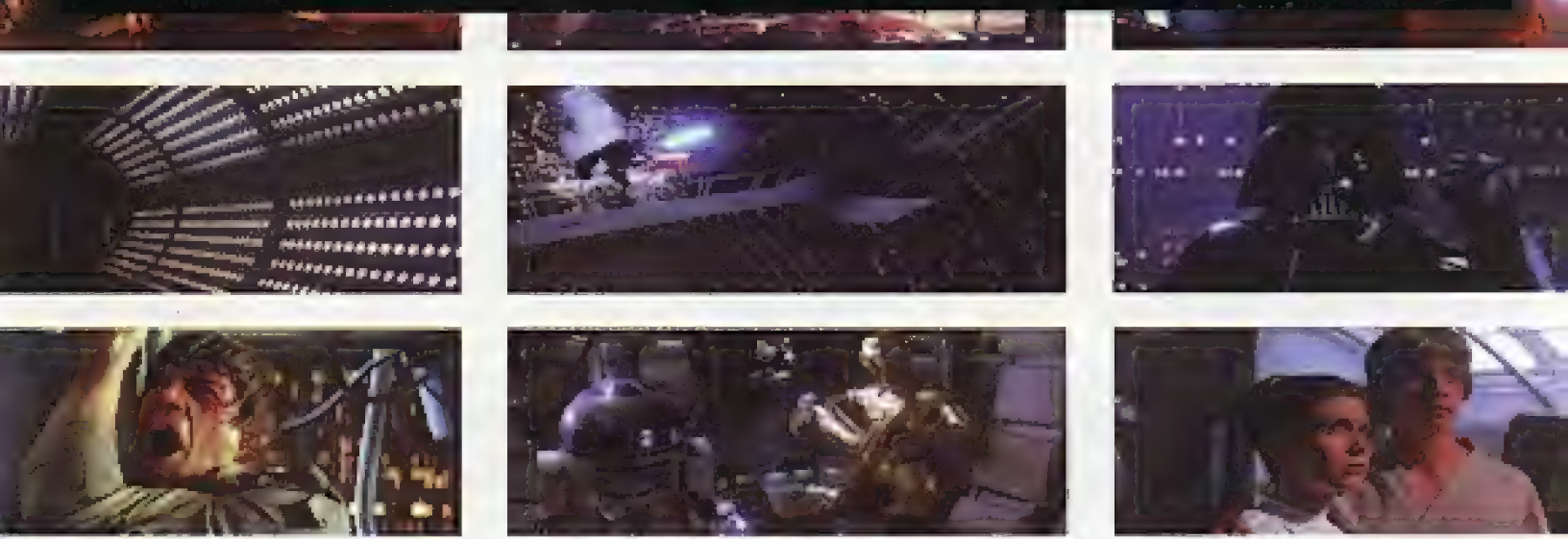
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After the huge success of *Star Wars*, which blazed filmmaking and licensing trails, you would think that manufacturers from around the world must have beat down the doors at Lucasfilm, begging to get a license for the highly anticipated sequel, *The Empire Strikes Back*.

You would be wrong.

Just as licensees didn't initially bet on *Star Wars* being a merchandising blockbuster because there had never been a really successful product line derived from a film, the conventional wisdom was that all sequels were definite dogs. So why should *Empire* be any different?

"In 1978, when we started selling *The Empire Strikes Back*, it was like running into a brick wall," says Maggie Young, then

KENNER'S VERSION OF THE BATTLE OF HOTH INCLUDED AN ARMADA OF REBEL AND IMPERIAL VEHICLES AND WEAPONS.

the recently hired head of Lucasfilm's licensing department (assuming the role that Charlie Lippincott had handled so well for the first film). "It was the hardest sale imaginable. And I think it was because there was no precedent for this kind of movie merchandising. Plus we were selling a sequel, which just were not that successful in those days."

The licensing campaign for *Empire* revolved around Kenner Products, the Cincinnati toy maker that did so phenomenally well with its *Star Wars* line of action figures and vehicles. That success kept *Star Wars* in the public consciousness during the making of *Empire*. It also meant that besides introducing new toys for *Empire*, the original *Star Wars* figures would be re-released on different "cards" (the term for the toys' cardboard packaging).

For some reason, even though the *Empire* line sold well during the period surrounding the film's release, until recently, *Empire* figures have been among the slowest to rise in value among collectors. That odd situation is now changing as more collectors have entered the field and nearly all action figures still sealed on cards have become harder to find. Still, figures packaged on many *Empire* cards remain affordable for collectors who are trying to get at least one mint carded specimen for each Kenner figure produced. (Many collectors find that a very satisfactory, although still challenging way

EMPIRE

SELLS OUT!

A long list of action figures, vehicles and playsets followed the release of The Empire Strikes Back, and now they're sought by collectors

BY STEVE SANSWEET



THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK INSPIRED KENNER'S HOT BATTLE SCENE, NEW VERSIONS OF FAVORITE CHARACTERS AND VESSELS LIKE THE REBEL TRANSPORT.

to collect each figure is to get it on the first card on which it was released.)

Following the initial 20 figures from *STAR WARS* and the 1979 introduction of Boba Fett after his debut on television's *STAR WARS Holiday Special*, Kenner released 10 new figures in 1980, "including the ever-popular Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia and Han Solo in new outfits," as the company's Toy Fair catalog then put it. Another 10 were released the following year, and by 1982, the Kenner lineup included 47 action figures plus a retooled R2-D2 (with Sensorscope) and C-3PO (with removable limbs). Today, *Empire* figures on a mint card sell for between \$45 - \$125+ each.

There were some subtle differences along the

way, both in the *Empire* figures and cards. For example, Yoda's orange snake turned into a brown one. Princess Leia in her Bespin gown had either a long neck or a high collar, and the front-of-card photo showed either a profile or a head-on shot. Luke/Bespin fatigues sold as a brunette or a blond, and the card changed from a somewhat out-of-focus three-quarters figure to a sharper head and torso shot. Lando Calrissian came either somber or with a big smile and bright eyes. Ugnaught figures came with either a blue or a lavender smock.

In addition to the small action figures, the last in the line of large figures (or dolls) was released in conjunction with *Empire*. The 15" IG-88 came with two weapons and an ammunition belt. Because the bounty hunter was released so long after the others, and fewer were made after the major toy stores decided not to stock any more dolls, IG-88 is the hardest one to find mint in a mint box (around \$400+). Kenner had planned to release all the dolls in *Empire* boxes (and, in fact, printed up a batch of such boxes with the *Empire* logo), but except for IG-88 and Boba Fett (\$275), they are scarce and very expensive. Kenner also produced prototypes of a Lando doll and new costumes for Han, Luke and Leia, but none went into production because of retailers' reluctance to carry them.

Of all the *Empire* characters, Yoda created the

most buzz among moviegoers. It's surprising so few Yoda toys were made. As mentioned in Issue # 3's column about *STAR WARS* aliens, Kenner produced an 8 1/2" fairly rigid sculpted Yoda hand puppet (\$35) and a Yoda "fortune teller" (\$40). There was a Yoda the Jedi Master board game (\$35) in which players train to become Jedi Knights, a coloring book with a Yoda cover (\$5) and a Yoda Play-Doh playset with a plastic X-wing fighter, a plastic Dagobah playmat and three hinged molds to make Yoda and other *Empire* characters (\$30). And there was a Dagobah playset in which Yoda or Luke could "levitate" objects (\$65).

Among *Empire*'s other playsets were two Sears exclusives with cardboard backdrops, used mainly to sell action figures: Rebel Command Center (\$200) and Cloud City playset (\$325). The Hoth Ice Planet Adventure playset (\$150) includes a cardboard AT-AT with a manually operated "elevator" to lift captured Rebels up into the walker's belly. The Imperial Attack Base playset (\$65) caves in and falls apart—deliberately—and there's a matching Turret and Probot playset (\$120). Darth Vader's Star Destroyer playset (\$200) is a pie-shaped slice of the bridge, made to snap onto a kid's arm so he or she can fly around the room with it. (If you remember the old TV commercials, it looked pretty silly.)

Empire introduced some way-cool vehicles, too, including one that has achieved legendary status. The die-cast TIE bomber was actually the fourth and last ship in Series II, the rest of which had been released the year before in *STAR WARS* packaging. Most retailers decided not to reorder the entire assortment for just one new ship. Montgomery Ward was one of the few chains that did get it (mine still has an original price tag of \$6.99!), thus the scarcity and the ridiculously high price of around \$700+. Much more reasonable are the Rebel Armored Snowspeeder (\$125), Twin-Pod Cloud Car (\$85), the giant AT-AT (\$160), Rebel Transport (\$125),

Scout Walker (\$95) and—my favorite of the film—Boba Fett's *Slave I* (\$195).

No Kenner line would be complete without carrying cases for the action figures. The rarest one for *Empire* is a black vinyl case with the same artwork as on the *STAR WARS* case but with the *Empire* logo (\$75). That was shipped as the film was opening in May 1980, and was quickly changed to one with art featuring Yoda and scenes from *Empire*, with the logo in the upper left



KENNER'S MICRO COLLECTION INTRODUCED A NEW SCALE OF DIE-CAST METAL FIGURES AND NINE EMPIRE PLAYSETS, INCLUDING RESPIN WORLD AND HOTH WORLD.



corner (\$40). In 1982, a third design was released, with the logo in the center (\$40). A dimensional case of Darth Vader's head held 31 figures (\$30). Mold and packaging tests of that case in white, mustard gold and gold-plated plastic have entered the collectors' market in recent years, fetching \$150+.

Empire creatures weren't totally ignored. There was Luke's trusty tauntaun (\$45), re-released in 1982 with an "open-belly rescue feature" (\$45) to save Luke from freezing in the ice storms on Hoth. That same year, a wampa with spring-loaded arms was also offered (\$45).

There was a "New Improved!" lightsaber with a neon yellow, green or red blade (\$50+). Those were *supposed* to be battery-operated and light up, but by the time the 1980 Toy Fair catalog was published, a sticker informed buyers that "The Force" lightsaber didn't use batteries.

Five mini-rigs and three action-figure accessories were produced for *Empire* (\$20+ each). But the prize for strangest—and maybe coolest—item goes to the *ESB* Switcheroos (\$45), glow-in-the-dark light-switch plates featuring a molded Darth Vader with “sneaky-pink eyes in the light, showing his true evil yellow eyes at night.” R2-D2 and C-3PO Switcheroos also had yellow eyes that glowed in the dark, but the same copywriter somehow didn’t find those very menacing.

For all of Kenner’s success, it failed big time with a line that I personally loved at first sight but that was still on the clearance shelf of Toys R Us well after *Return of the Jedi* had come and gone from theaters. That was the Micro Collection. Launched in the summer of 1982, it was an entirely new scale of figures and playsets. The line was scaled to painted, die-cast metal figures that were about 1 1/4” tall. Each of the nine playsets (\$40 - \$90 each) came with anywhere from four to eight figures in various poses, but they were on bases and not jointed, so they couldn’t be manipulated.



The playsets were made to be modular so they could fit together to make Bespin, Hoth and Death Star “worlds.” In addition to being sold separately, they were also packaged together and sold as those worlds (\$90 - \$200). There also were four vehicles, two of them limited-edition exclusives: a Sears-only *Millennium Falcon* (\$225+) and a J.C. Penney snowspeeder (\$100+). Plans and even prototypes were developed for more playsets, including a bacta chamber, where an injured Luke is healed after his wampa attack and freezing night outside on Hoth.

As recounted in *STAR WARS: From Concept to Screen to Collectible*, Howard Bollinger, then Kenner’s vice president of product design and engineering, originally conceived of the Micro line as more of a collectible than a toy, with posed figures from dozens of major scenes in the films, along with diorama “film clip” backgrounds. “I think it would have been dynamite, but in the process of development, it got changed and the concept got watered down,” Bollinger says.

The Kenner designers threw themselves into the Micro Collection—literally. “We sat down and came up with ideas of what characters should go with each playset and what their poses should be,” says Mark Boudreaux, then and still the head *STAR WARS* designer at Kenner. “Then we took all the furniture out of a large conference room, set up three cameras on tripods at different angles and took turns being models, striking poses and using broom handles as lightsabers and other weapons. We gave those photos, along with photos of the characters, to sculptors who made the actual figures.”

Conceptually, the Micro Collection sounded like a clever idea, recalls David Mauer, Kenner’s executive vice president of marketing at the time. “But, after the fact, we discovered that kids hated posed soldier-like figures. And the toys weren’t open-ended. Once they put one of these Micro playsets on the ground, they were forced into a particular play pattern, and by definition that’s limiting.” Plus, parents who had made a sizable investment in the larger-scale toys weren’t anxious to spend another pile of cash on an incompatible line. Collectors, too, long ignored the Micro Collection.

But in the last couple of years the toys have finally taken off in popularity. Ironically, the hottest new line of *STAR WARS* toys in nearly a decade has been Galoob’s Micro Machines vehicles,

figures and playsets—which are even smaller than the earlier Kenner versions. Howard Bollinger’s instincts were right. Alas, he was just about a dozen years too early! ☹

Steve Sansweet is the author of STAR WARS: From Concept to Screen to Collectible and co-author of Tomart's Price Guide to Worldwide Star Wars Collectibles. The prices in this column are adapted from the Tomart Guide, but the author does not make a market in such items and cannot guarantee availability at the stated price.

Re: Fett Fāñātīcs

If there is a poster boy for *STAR WARS* fans on the Internet, it must be Boba Fett. No other character gets more posts or bulletin boards devoted to him than the bounty hunter in Mandalore battle armor. For trilogy enthusiasts on-line, nobody tops Fettheads for their devotion!

For Fans of Fett, the mysterious anti-hero who debuted on the *STAR WARS Holiday Special* in 1978, and nearly stole the show

BY KEVIN FITZPATRICK (k72ndst@aol.com.)

in *The Empire Strikes Back* (*ESB*), it's been more than 15 years of dedication to the man with the rocket darts (or is it a woman under that helmet?). And an increasingly popular way for Fettish fans to trade theories, opinions, jabs and jokes about Han Solo's arch enemy is via computers and modems. You might even make a deal for his action figure—mint in box, of course.

"I believe a lot of the reason Boba Fett is so revered is because of all the hype his character received even before *ESB* came out," says Jason Doolittle (jrdoolit@vax1.acs.jmu.edu). "He was the only new character whom everyone knew before going to see the movie. His Kenner figure came out amongst huge fanfare ('Free figure from new movie!' the toy maker's offer screamed), he was big before anyone saw *ESB* and he got even bigger once he appeared in the film."

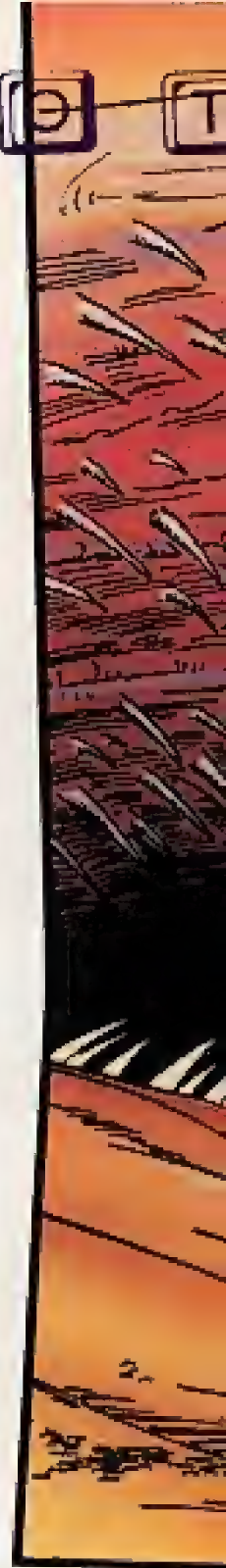
RE: The "COOLNESS" Meter

There's no doubt Fett is a top vote-getter in science-fiction popularity polls. But why? What's with him? For fans on-line who worship him, the debate rages: What makes Fett so cool?

Well, you can start with the costume, which is totally unique; Fett's mask is better than Batman's and Judge Dredd's. Overall, though, most simply say it's Boba's mysterious, can't-touch-me attitude. Plus he pilots *Slave I*, one of the most fearsome vehicles in the trilogy.

"I started by wondering about Fett's coolness, but if you pay attention to the movies, he is kinda cool," says Brian Doeber (brian.doeber@launchpad.unc.edu). "The first sight of him is on the Star Destroyer with all the other bounty hunters. Vader talks to him personally, so he must have a reputation. In my eyes, this earns him a lot of respect. On Bespin, he talks to Vader almost as an equal. His attitude is what makes him cool."

So, how do you measure the coolness of Fett? Is it the maneuvers he makes? His cunning at capturing Han Solo? Or the way he deals with Jabba the Hutt. Although he later became a legit star in Dark Horse's *Dark Empire* comics, in *ESB* and *Return of the Jedi* (*RJ*), the bounty hunter only had limited screen time—which makes you wonder if perhaps that cinematic tease actually helped make Fett the Clint Eastwood of *STAR WARS*.





"The less Boba Fett says, the more mystery surrounds him," states Jimmy Wu (wuji@acfz.nyu.edu). "But how about his cool armor? I think it looks sleek and menacing at the same time. I hope he is in the prequels planned by George Lucas."

Neil Shepard (nshepa1@gl.umbc.edu) was one of the many kids who sent away for the Fett action figures. "That started the fascination for me, wondering who this guy was, what side he was on," says Neil. "I always assumed he was a bad guy, just because he looked kind of ominous and

deadly. When I finally got to see him in *ESB*, it was thrilling because after months and months of having little battles with my Kenner figures, here was the guy I had theorized and wondered about.

"People love not knowing his background. Where's the fun in knowing everything? Was he a Mandalore soldier who fought the Jedi in the Clone Wars? Was he a former Imperial stormtrooper? Was he a relative of Han Solo? Did he know Darth Vader personally? It enables us Fett fans to use our imaginations to the point where we could talk for hours about Fett, coming up with theories and stories. Combine that with his great costume and the fact that he just radiated pure nastiness on the screen. That's what makes Fett so utterly cool," Neil says.

RE: THE FETT RE

How'd Fett get the reputation for being the galaxy's bad boy? Sure, he's the guy with the jet pack and Wookiee pelts, but does that make for a fearsome villain?

"Boba represents the most interesting kind of character in *STAR WARS*," says Cecil Leung (bc442@freenet.toronto.on.ca). "He is not affiliated with the Empire nor the Rebellion. He's a mercenary. This is not unlike Han Solo before his conversion. Fett doesn't mince words or fight under the banner of any cause, he just kicks [butt] for the purpose of attaining money. Also, because of the fact that so little about him is told in the films, he has that mysterious quality about

him. Nobody is sure where he's from or what his objectives really are."

Fett is like another cinema icon, someone from the American Old West, offers Simon H. Lee (shl10@cornell.edu). "I'm sure this line of reasoning has come up before, but he has the same general mysteriousness as Clint Eastwood's *Man With No Name*: He comes in, does his thing and leaves—and he doesn't talk much in between." Simon says.

RE: Añ 18ñ061é Eññ?

Everyone knows that in *RJ*, during the battle in Tatooine's Dune Sea, Fett disappears into the Great Pit of Carkoon, screaming his head off. No way for a hard-case warrior to go, but that's what happened. Today the Net buzzes with theories about Fett's ultimate fate.

"When our heroes start to fight their way out of Jabba's clutches at the Great Pit of Carkoon," says Paul Ouellette (pouellet@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca), "Boba jumps over to the skiff and starts fighting Han. Why? Fett is a bounty hunter. Presumably, he

has already been paid by Jabba for delivering Solo. Although Leia freed Han from the carbonite, why should Fett care? He did his job—and made some quality enemies in the process—but I would have thought that as a cunning, ruthless bounty hunter, he would have tried to escape in order to continue his mercenary ways. I suppose he could have been fighting for control of the skiff, worrying that if the Rebels win the fight, he won't have a ride back to civilization. But I don't really like that idea. And Fett doesn't strike me as the kind of bounty hunter to put himself in permanent employ to one person, like the rest of Jabba's sycophantic courtiers."

Jeff Gaulin's (jgaulin@jullian.uwo.ca) response is that it was a business decision. "Obviously, Fett didn't think the Rebels were going to win the battle with Jabba, or he would have looked at the bottom line and gotten off Tatooine. Instead, he probably thought of the reward for killing Solo and Skywalker on Jabba's behalf. Very,

very good business. The last thing he would have wanted on his reputation

"People love not knowing his background. Where's the fun in knowing everything?... It enables us Fett fans to use our imaginations to the point where we could talk for hours about Fett, coming up with theories and stories...."

— Neil Shepard

would have been to be seen as a coward had Jabba's side prevailed.

For Fett freaks in general, it's a mystery as to who their hero is. For those on the Net, though, the debate rages on nightly. ☺

Kevin Fitzpatrick (k72ndSt@aol.com) is a freelance writer in New York. He first encountered *Boba Fett* in 1980 at the *Creve Coeur (Missouri) Cinema* with pal Mike Schrand.

Rè: Gëttiñg H00këd UP

How do you get on-line and join the legion of Fett fanatics? It's easy. Of course, you need a home computer, so find a hardware-dealing Jawa near you. You'll also need a modem (most new PCs come equipped with one) that hooks into your phone line and connects your PC to a computer network. There are commercial subscription networks such as CompuServe, Prodigy, Delphi, America Online and GENie. They charge a flat monthly fee that includes four or five hours of on-line time, and then charge hourly rates for extra time (the call that hooks you in is a local one, so generally there are no long-distance phone charges).

But watch out! Those extra charges can mount up for regular cyber chatters. Check out one of the many computer magazines for tips on which system best serves your interests. Smaller, private bulletin boards (bbs) also have areas that are devoted to science fiction and Star Wars. Consult computer shops in your area for ones that have local access phone numbers. Finally, if you are a student at a school with computer systems available, check with your system operator to see how to connect to the Net.

ONCE YOU'RE ON-LINE... Here's how to get into *STAR WARS* areas on the various commercial services:

- 1) America Online: Under keyword (Command K) "Science Fiction" you'll find the "*STAR WARS*" area with 30 folders of information, including "Boba Fett Fans," as well as the "*STAR WARS* Library" where the "frequently asked questions" (FAQ) list is kept.
- 2) CompuServe: Type "Go To Science Fiction." *STAR WARS* is a discussion group there.
- 3) Delphi: Custom Forum 30, "*STAR WARS* Forum" message board.
- 4) GENie: Look in the "Science Fiction" and "Movies" area for other *STAR WARS* fans.
- 5) Prodigy: Jump to "Sci-Fi" bulletin board, where *STAR WARS* is a topic. Note: Many younger users there.



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TRIVIA STRIKES BACK CONTEST

An All-Empire Brainteaser

From the frozen battlefield on Hoth to Bespin's Cloud City, *The Empire Strikes Back* is packed with heroes, villains and non-stop, FX-filled action. To celebrate the 15th anniversary of the release of *Empire*, here are 15 trivia questions sure to test your knowledge of the landmark

USE THE FORCE

movie. Answer the questions correctly and unscramble the circled letters (hint: it's where we last saw Luke, Leia, et al). Mail us the correct answers, and we'll enter you in our random drawing to win a treasure trove of *STAR WARS* goodies.

25

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3 SECOND PRIZES Complete set of *The Empire Strikes Back* Widevision cards, including chase cards, courtesy of Topps

19 THIRD PRIZES Retail box (24 packs) of *Empire* Widevision cards

Entries must be received by **October 31, 1995**. One entry per person. Answers will appear in Issue #6; winners will be notified by mail. Photocopies or hand-written copies of this contest are acceptable.

Name _____ Birth Date _____
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MAIL YOUR ENTRY TO: Contest #4, *STAR WARS GALAXY MAGAZINE*,
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(Sorry, no e-mail entries)

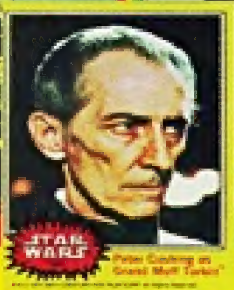
ANSWERS TO "Tatooine Trivia Quiz" in Issue #2: 1) Frier; 2) womp rats; 3) banthas; 4) Owen Lars; 5) Academy; 6) vocabulator; 7) Jawas; 8) lightsaber; 9) skyhopper; 10) Docking Bay 94. Bonus Answer: Anchorhead

- 1) Droids deployed by the Empire to find the Rebel base on Hoth.
- 2) Alliance field officer assigned to the Rebel base on Hoth.
- 3) Rebel pilot who rescued Luke and Han on Hoth.
- 4) Medical droid that treated Luke two different times.
- 5) Gigantic, worm-like creatures that inhabit asteroids.
- 6) Imperial officer who assumed command of the *Executor* after Admiral Ozzel was "relieved of his duty" by Darth Vader.
- 7) Planet on which Han Solo says he was nearly captured by a pair of bounty hunters.
- 8) The starship owned and operated by Boba Fett.
- 9) The type of battle armor worn by Boba.
- 10) Reptilian bounty hunter contracted by Lord Vader to track down the *Millennium Falcon* and her crew.
- 11) Bat-like parasites known for attaching themselves to starships and feeding off their energy.
- 12) Edible twig that Yoda was fond of chewing.
- 13) Rare gas extracted from Bespin's atmosphere and processed in Cloud City.
- 14) Landing pad on Cloud City where the *Falcon* was moored.
- 15) Humanoid-porcine beings who live and work in Cloud City.

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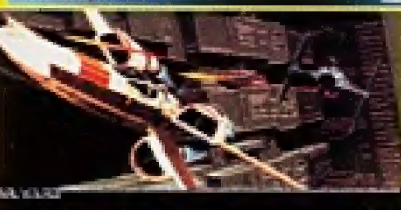
C6-Falcon's escape

C7-Rebel pilots

C8-Death Star battle

C9-Rebel starfighters

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BATTLE OF HOTH

The Hard, Cold Facts About Hoth

Filming the scenes of the icy planet took the cast and crew of *The Empire Strikes Back* to Norway, England and California **By Andy Mangels**

It's May 21, 1980. Movie theaters across America are packed with wide-eyed fans of all ages. They sit and watch as a familiar Klingon-like warship rises up the screen, announcing the long-awaited movie, *The Empire Strikes Back*. As the words melt into the mind of space, little do the millions of viewers expect that they soon will be transported to some place almost as cold—the frozen wastes of the planet Hoth.

FROZEN IN HISTORY

In case you missed it, here, in a nutshell (or on ice robe?) is the gist of the story behind *Empire*. In the year following the destruction of the first Death Star, the Rebel Alliance faced a precarious future. The Imperials had surely discovered the location of their hidden base on the moon Yavin Four, and it seemed only a matter of time before the base was attacked. Scouts were sent to farflung locations around the galaxy to search out possible sites for a new base. By accident, Luke Skywalker discovered Hoth, a planet covered with snow and glaciers. If there were sentient beings on the world other than the two-legged tauntauns, they didn't show up on the probe.

By the time the Empire launched an offensive strike on Yavin Four, the Rebels were already heading toward Hoth in a caravan of cargo, transport and fighter ships. On the snowy planet, they carved out huge ice caverns and hangars; they set up turret defense towers and a massive ion cannon to defend their new base from

skies. Skywalker and other Rebel pilots, flying sleek, two-man, wedge-shaped starfighters, mounted a defensive strike against the ground assault. Although the Rebels were able to take out several of the walkers, many troops were killed during the evacuation.

While Darth Vader and a cadre of cold-weather outfitted snowtroopers were raiding Echo Base, the Millennium Falcon and the last of the Rebel transports escaped. Their efforts guaranteed that the battle against the Empire would rage on for some time.

ICEBREAKERS

Director Irvin Kershner, his production crew and the cast of actors only had an inkling of what lay ahead in film.

days of filming. Finnish alpine rescue teams played the parts of Rebel warriors. Hamill rode a mechanical tauntaun that only existed from the shoulders up and Harrison Ford and Hamill braved an actual blizzard during their outdoor scenes.

At the same time, the crew endured blinding, numbing snowstorms, sub-zero temperatures that literally broke the film and chilled cameras whose viewfinders eventually fogged up from condensation. And only the Force could help any crew member who dared touch frozen metal equipment with bare hands. Needless to say, everyone was relieved when the final shots were in the can and the Empire cast and crew headed for warmer climes.

while actors and plaster sprayed with paint gave the snow-laden and stagy-looking their icy sheen.

Meanwhile, an ocean and a continent away, another dimension of the Battle of Hoth was underway...

PUPPET SHOWS

In Marin County, California, north of San Francisco, the special effects geniuses at Lucasfilm's Industrial Light & Magic were busy making the action of the battle sequences a reality. Although many of them were veterans of *Star Wars*, the movie that reinvented the effects business, their mission was to create themselves with the Hoth sequence.

Kershner worked with Visual Effects Art Director Joe Johnston, Conceptual Artist Ralph McQuarrie and others to develop the look, action and timing of the Hoth scenes, shuffling designs, blueprints and storyboards back and forth from Pinole and England to the ILM headquarters. The live-action shots had to match the sequences with the puppets and models built to create many of *Empire's* more fantastic creatures and machines.

Luke's tauntaun had been designed from sketches by Johnston, McQuarrie and stop-motion animator Phil Tippett. Originally it was to have been a hairless reptile, then an ostrich-like creature. The model makers and artists finally agreed upon a furry, kangaroo-like beast with characteristics borrowed from a camel, a

attack. General Carlist Rieekan was placed in charge of the base, while other Rebel leaders planned the future of the Alliance on warmer worlds.

Rebel teams soon caught and trained the tauntauns, domesticating them as rider/pack animals to use in exploring the frozen wastes. While Commander Skywalker was out playing scenarios, he sighted a meteor crashing nearby, but concluded that it was nothing to worry about. A short time later, Luke was brutally attacked and knocked unconscious by a vicious wampa ice creature (a species that apparently went undetected in earlier scans), which dragged the wounded prey off to its cove.

Unfortunately for the Rebels, that "meteorite" Luke saw actually was something artificial: an Imperial probe droid (probot), one of several deployed throughout the galaxy to ferret out any new Rebel bases. Although the weakened Luke managed to escape the wampa by using the power of the Force and his trusty light saber, he collapsed on the way back to the base during a fierce blizzard. He was found by Han Solo before freezing to death, and the two were forced to spend a frigid night outside before being rescued the next morning. Meanwhile, dire news was intercepted by the Rebels: that probot had already transmitted word of the existence of Echo Base back to the Empire.

An immediate evacuation was ordered, but even as the Rebels scrambled, the Empire advanced. Leading its ground assault were tremendous four-legged All Terrain Armored Transports—known as AT-ATs or walkers—and smaller All Terrain Scout Transports—known as AT-STs or chicken walkers. The monstrous machines steadily marched toward the base, firing on the main shield generators even as Rebel ships escaped into the

ice. When they read the script to *The Empire Strikes Back*, ice planets and glaciers? Simple for the special effects whizzes, right? If it had been anything other than the sequel to the largest grooming film to that date, maybe. But *Empire* had a lot riding on it, and cheap soap-like snow storms and frosted sheets wouldn't cut it on this film.

The search for the perfect Hoth led Johnston to Pinole, Norway. 1240 meters above sea level and the site of a massive glacier, Accessible only by a single-track electrified railroad, Pinole had but one hotel. The film crew began shipping in equipment, which eventually filled a good portion of the hotel, as well as several railroad buildings and a multitude of tents and makeshift shelters.

Finally, on Saturday, March 3, 1979, nearly 70 crew and cast members assembled to begin shooting the ground-breaking—and ice-breaking—sequel. The first unit worked almost non-stop until March 12, though Mark Hamill stayed on for several days to film shots with the second unit on the glacier. In those cold



JOLLY OL' ICMO BASE

The weather proved to be only slightly warmer outside London, England, as the *Empire* entourage pulled up to the famed Elstree Studios. At least they'd be indoors. There, dozens of sets had been constructed for the movie, which coincidentally was sharing the facility with Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*. Many of the sets were interiors of the Rebel's Echo Base.

One particularly massive set housed the largest prop in *Star Wars* history: a full-sized Millennium Falcon. The replica was constructed in 16 interlocking pieces by maritime engineers in Wales and then shipped to Elstree. It weighed 20 tons, was nearly 70 feet in diameter and 18 feet high and had an overall length of 80 feet. Surrounding the Falcon were full-sized mock-ups of snowspeeders and X-wing fighters.

Other aspects of the base's interiors were equally impressive. Sheets of polystyrene were scored using hot wire-cutters to make the laser-carved ice corridors.

Johnston and Berg also were responsible for the AT-ATs and AT-STs. Initially the machines were designed like a Norwegian Army tank, but Johnston later crossed them with a four-legged, early '60s commercial vehicle. With swiveling heads and thick foot pads, the AT-ATs resembled huge prying animals.

Berg and Tom St. Armand created the walker models in two forms: 18-inch high versions and four-and-a-half-foot monstrosities. By watching test footage and films of real animals walking, they developed a style of locomotion for the AT-ATs. The inherent awkwardness of stop-motion animation actually was a strength, giving the walkers just the right mechanical look.

After the AT-AT shot was first composed over the live-action footage, one more step was needed to complete the scenes. Master artist Mike Pangrado was brought in to paint spectacular ice and glacial backgrounds. Finally, the combination of the matte paintings, stop-motion animation, other model magic, Nilo Roddis-Jamieson's miniature snow sets and the live-action footage brought incredible realism to the Hoth scenes. For moviegoers the world over, that battle between the Rebels and the Imperials in *The Empire Strikes Back* gave new meaning to the term "cold war."

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